STAR WARS®

OMNIBUS

X-WING ROGUE SQUADRON

VOLUME 2

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DARK HORSE BOOKS™

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This volume collects the stories from the *Star Wars: X-Wing—Rogue Squadron Special*, and from issues #9-20 of the series *Star Wars: X-Wing—Rogue Squadron*, encompassing the stories "Battleground: Tatooine," "Warrior Princess," and "Requiem for a Rogue," all originally published by Dark Horse Comics.

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FOREWORD

I should have known the minute Mike Stackpole was invited into the *Star Wars* universe that there was going to be trouble.

I first met Mike briefly at Coastcon in 1993, but I didn't really start getting to know him until Hurricon a year later when we had dinner with a mutual acquaintance. (I think they let me buy, but I could be mistaken.) He seemed a pleasant enough fellow, though I freely admit to a slight resentment that his convention stories were so much better than mine.

Mike was no stranger to the world of science fiction, of course. He'd been writing in the sci-fi game field since 1978, turning out game modules, rulebooks, and the occasional short story. He had also begun to branch out into novels, defining for the world just what a proper Battletech book should be. He would continue on considerably in that direction, both in other shared universes as well as creating his own original work. But that's getting ahead of things.

I ran into him off and on after that at various conventions, with our interactions staying mostly on the hi-how-are-you-what-are-you-working-on-these-days sort of level. Sometimes we grabbed lunch together. Often—not always—I let him buy.

And then in 1995, out of the blue, I picked up the phone and there was Mike. It seemed he'd just been contracted to write a series of *Star Wars X-Wing* books for Bantam and wanted to discuss the Rogue Squadron group I'd created for my own *Star Wars* books. He explained the basic story line and time frame he had in mind, and I provided what feedback I could about the squadron and the political/military situation that existed during that period. He thanked me, hung up, and settled down to write.

There is one view—I don't know how widely held—that the various *Star Wars* novelists are rather like an exclusive, genteel sort of private club. Following that analogy, you might say that Mike's arrival into the club was with a whooping cannonball into the pool. Here came the hotshot pilots of Rogue Squadron: brash, cocky, sometimes argumentative, often loud. (Yes, I know that Han and Chewie were also loud; but this was a different kind of loud.)

I suppose I assumed that my involvement with this project was now over. How little I knew. Barely had the first *X-Wing* book hit the stands when Mike was on the phone again, this time asking if he could use the character Talon Karrde in one of his upcoming books. We discussed the scene he had in mind and Karrde's likely behavior under the particular circumstances, and I gave him the okay.

Not that he needed my permission to use Karrde if he wanted to, you understand. Everything I or anyone else had contributed to the *Star Wars* saga was owned by Lucasfilm, and, as a new member of the club Mike automatically had full and open access to the complete grab bag. His call to me was simply a matter of professional courtesy, combined with the equally professional attitude of wanting to do the best job he could with every aspect of his books.

At any rate, he promised to send me a copy of the chapter when it was done, and in due course it arrived.

Frankly, I was surprised. Very pleasantly surprised. Out of the several pages

he'd written Karrde into, I found maybe three words I thought should be changed. Three words. Clearly, Mike had a pretty good grasp of my characters.

I soon had a chance to try things in the opposite direction. I was contracted to write one more *Star Wars* book for Bantam (which eventually grew into two books, but that's a different story), and as I finished the outline and started to work, I gave Mike a call to make sure our plots weren't going to step on each other's toes. Midway through the conversation, I suddenly realized that something he was planning to do with Booster Terrik would mesh perfectly with a plot point I already had written into my outline. I pointed this out and suggested the connection, got his enthusiastic approval to add Booster to my story, and sent him the chapter when it was done. He asked for changes in about—you guessed it—three words, and the process of throwing multiple links between our books had begun.

Eventually, it fell into an almost predictable routine. One of us would call the other with a five-minute question about something he was doing; and by the time we hung up the phone—usually an hour or so later—we had found another link or two we could set up. Eventually, Mike added Mara Jade and Winter to his roster of crossover characters; I returned the favor by working Corran Horn and Mirax into mine.

He finished his books, and once again, I assumed my involvement with his project was over. Again, how little I knew. For here came Dark Horse Comics and a brand new series of *X-Wing* comics. Before long, naturally, Mike was busy doing the stories for them.

And once again, we were back into the old routine. One of us would call the other to discuss conventions or signings or just basic news from the Outer Rim of the publishing world (we'd branched out beyond mere plot points by now), and he would tell me what he was planning to do and add it to my growing story development. Sometimes the link wasn't quite perfect, and we'd spend another half hour coming up with a way to tweak it so that it would work for both of our story lines.

Somewhere along the way, Mike was offered two more *Star Wars* books, one of them another *X-Wing* adventure and the other a so-called "mainstream" *Star Wars* book. More phone calls, more links. Some of them, in fact, we batted around so much that it's hard for me to remember which of us had the original idea in the first place.

Oh, and the trouble I mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, the trouble I should have known was coming? You'll find plenty of it here in this volume. Trouble for Wedge, trouble for Rogue Squadron, trouble for the whole New Republic. Creating trouble, you see, is yet another of those things Mike does so well.

But don't take my word for it. Turn to where the story starts, prepare yourself for the frantic roller-coaster world of *Rogue Squadron*, and dive on in. And enjoy.

Oh, and, Mike—next time, lunch is on me.

—TIMOTHY ZAHN

The fighter squadrons of the Rebel Alliance were the home units of many great heroes in the battles against Palpatine's Galactic Empire, and none were more renown than the pilots of Rogue Squadron. But it was after the turning point of the Battle of Endor when the Rogues, under the leadership of Wedge Antilles, proved their true importance to the New Republic.

With an assortment of different fighter craft, and an ever-changing roster of pilots, Rogue Squadron was instrumental in keeping the Imperial remnants in check and allowing the fledgling New Republic the time it needed to solidify its political and military base.

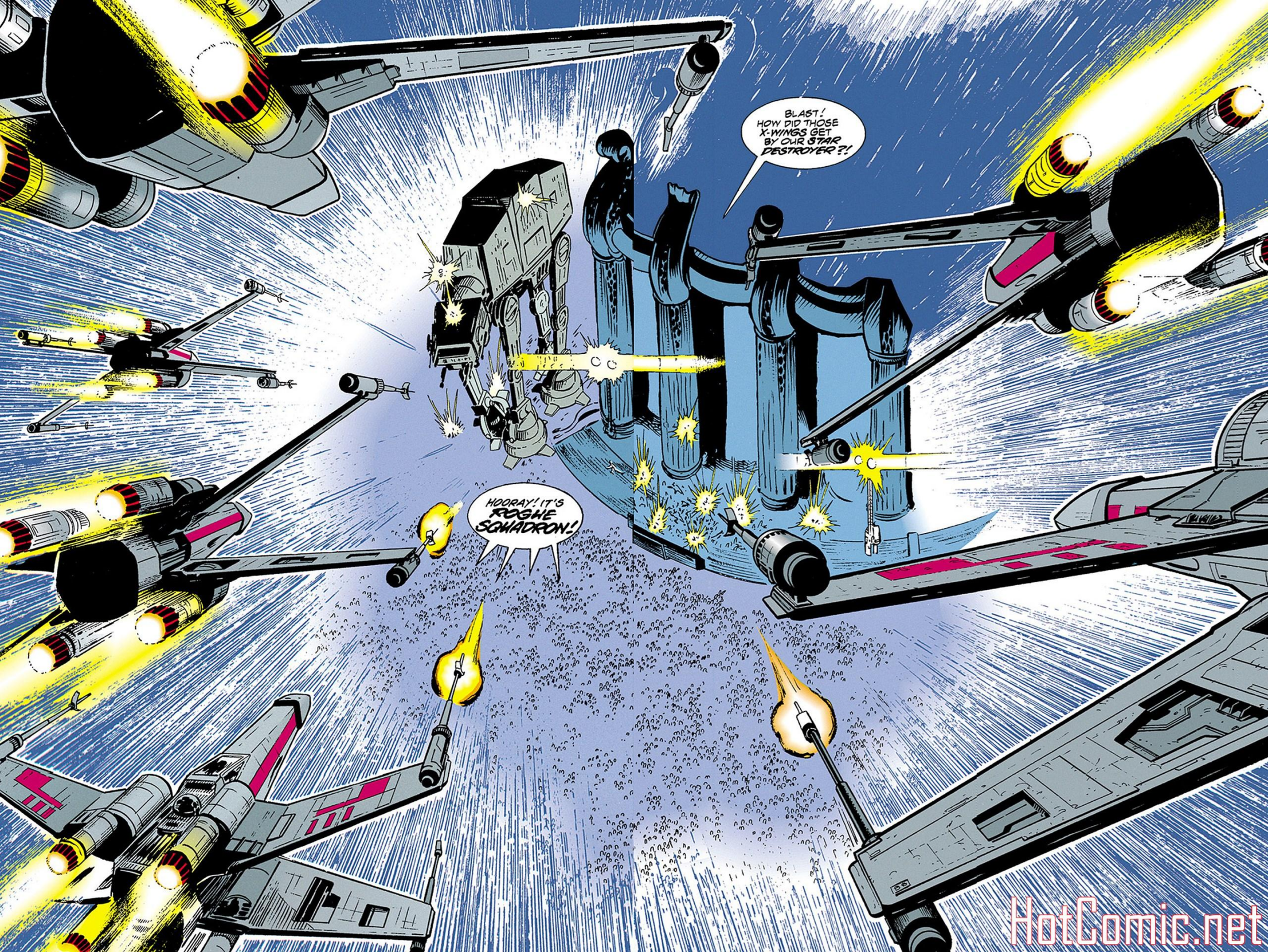
Here are the Rogues' stories . . .

X-Wing Rogue Squadron Special | illustration by Mark Harrison

A few weeks after the Battle of Endor . . .

script by Ryder Windham
pencils by John Nadeau
inks by Monty Sheldon
colors by Cary Porter
letters by Steve Dutro

THE PLANET TANDANKIN.
ATTENTION, CITIZENS! I AM GRAND MOFF NIVERS. THIS PLANET IS NOW UNDER CONTROL OF THE EMPIRE!
YOU WILL WORK FOR THE EMPIRE...
...OR YOU WILL SUFFER!
OH, FATHER! CAN'T ANYONE HELP US?
WE WILL BEGIN BY--
..WHAT'S THAT SOUND?



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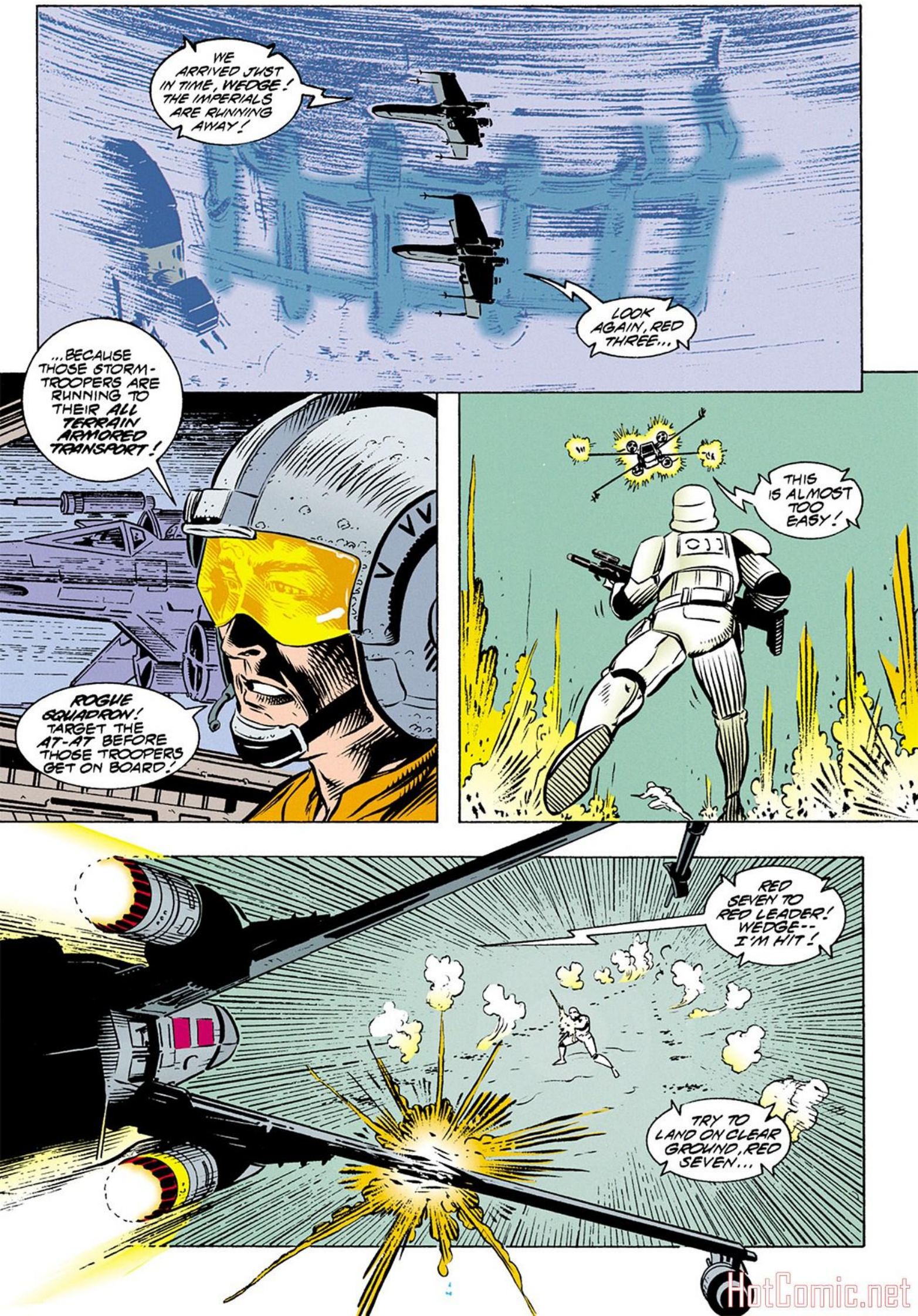

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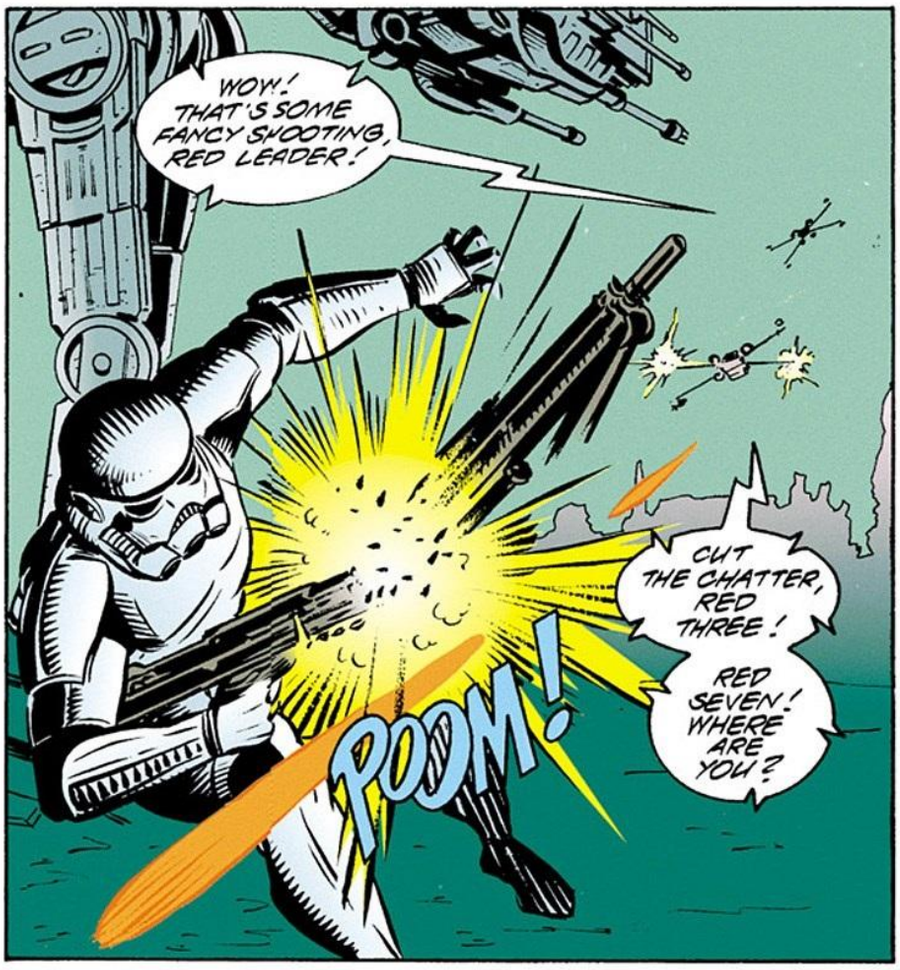
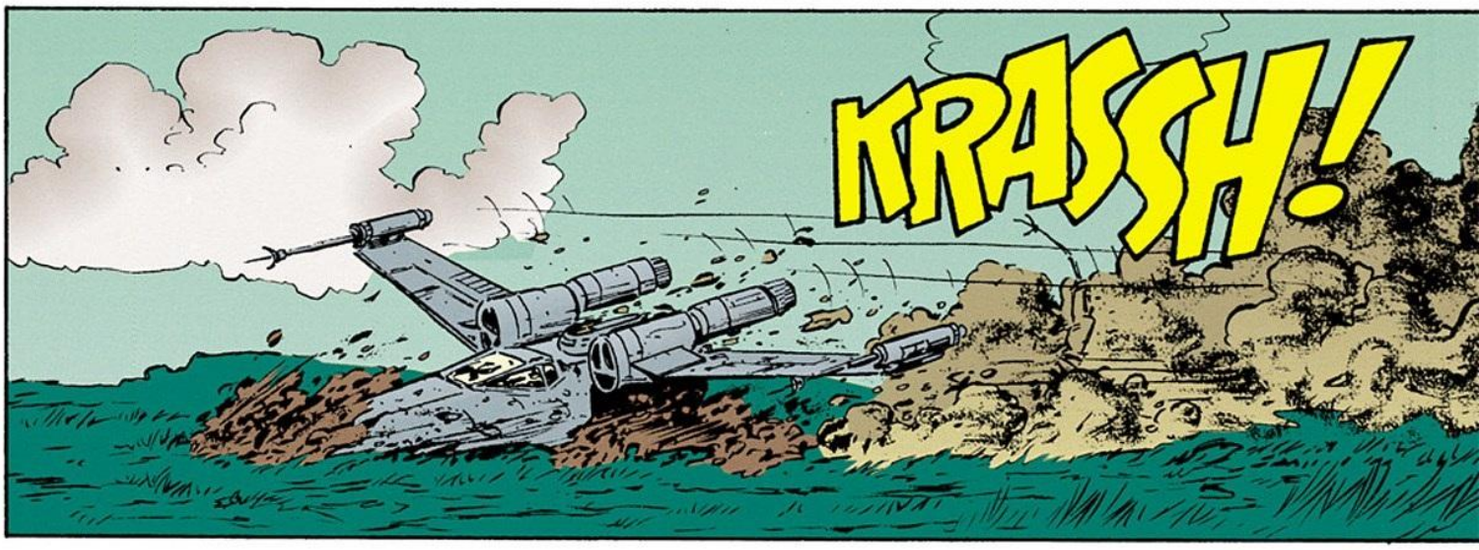
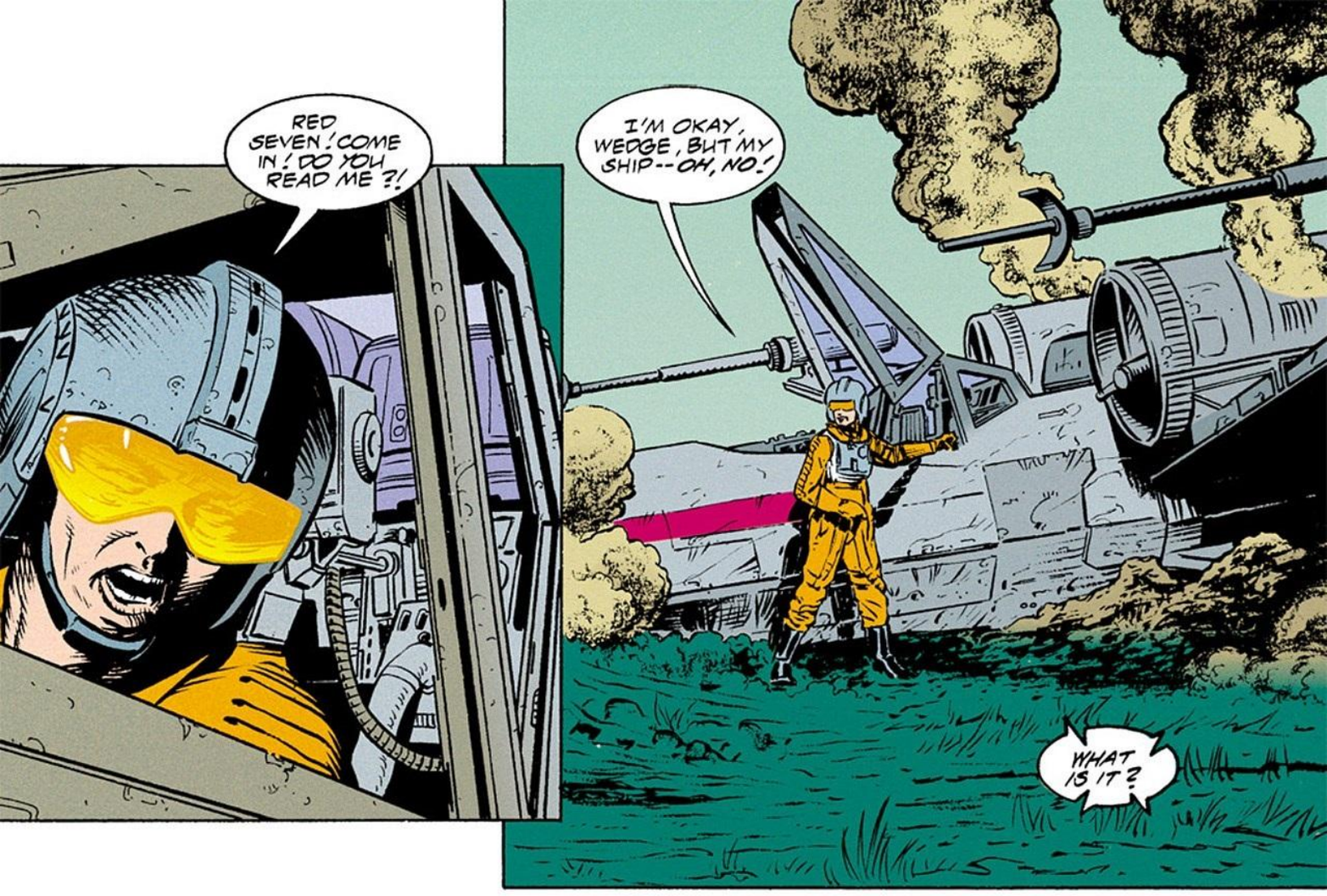
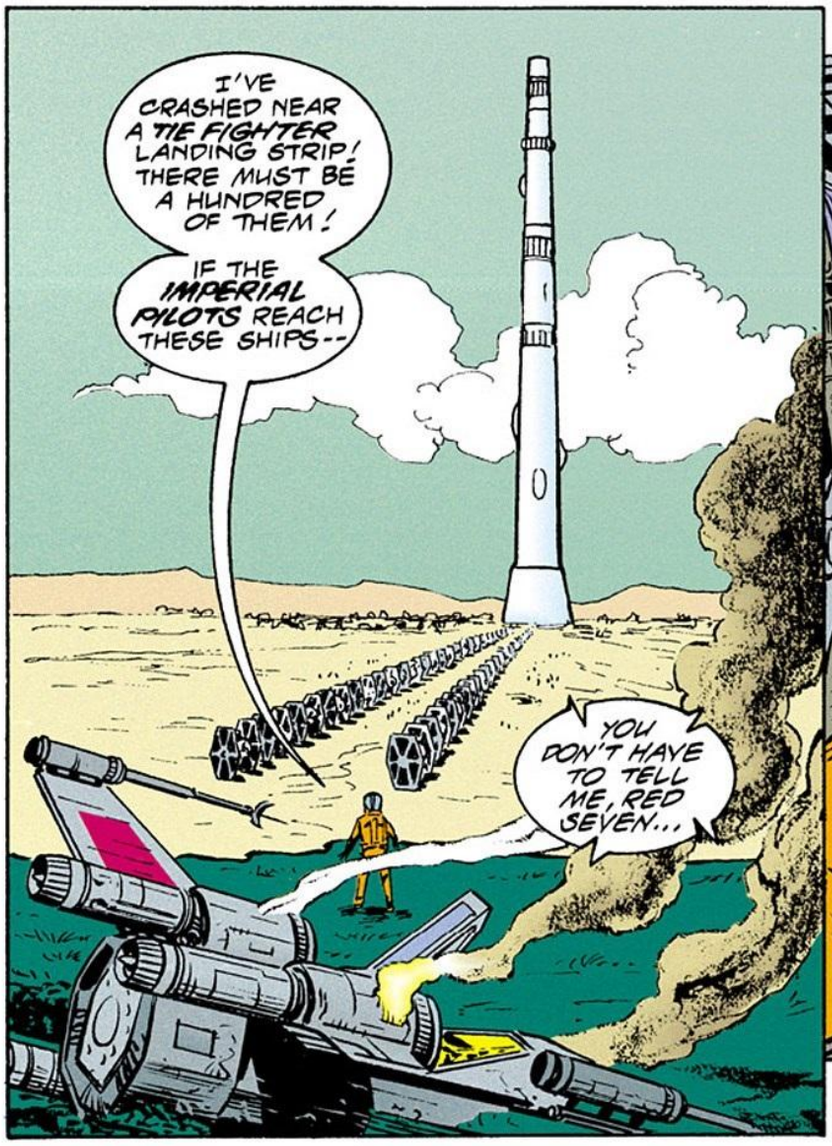
... AND I'LL TAKE CARE OF THAT TRIGGER-HAPPY STORMTROOPER!


WOW! THAT'S SOME FANCY SHOOTING, RED LEADER!
CUT THE CHATTER, RED THREE!
RED SEVEN! WHERE ARE YOU?
POOM!

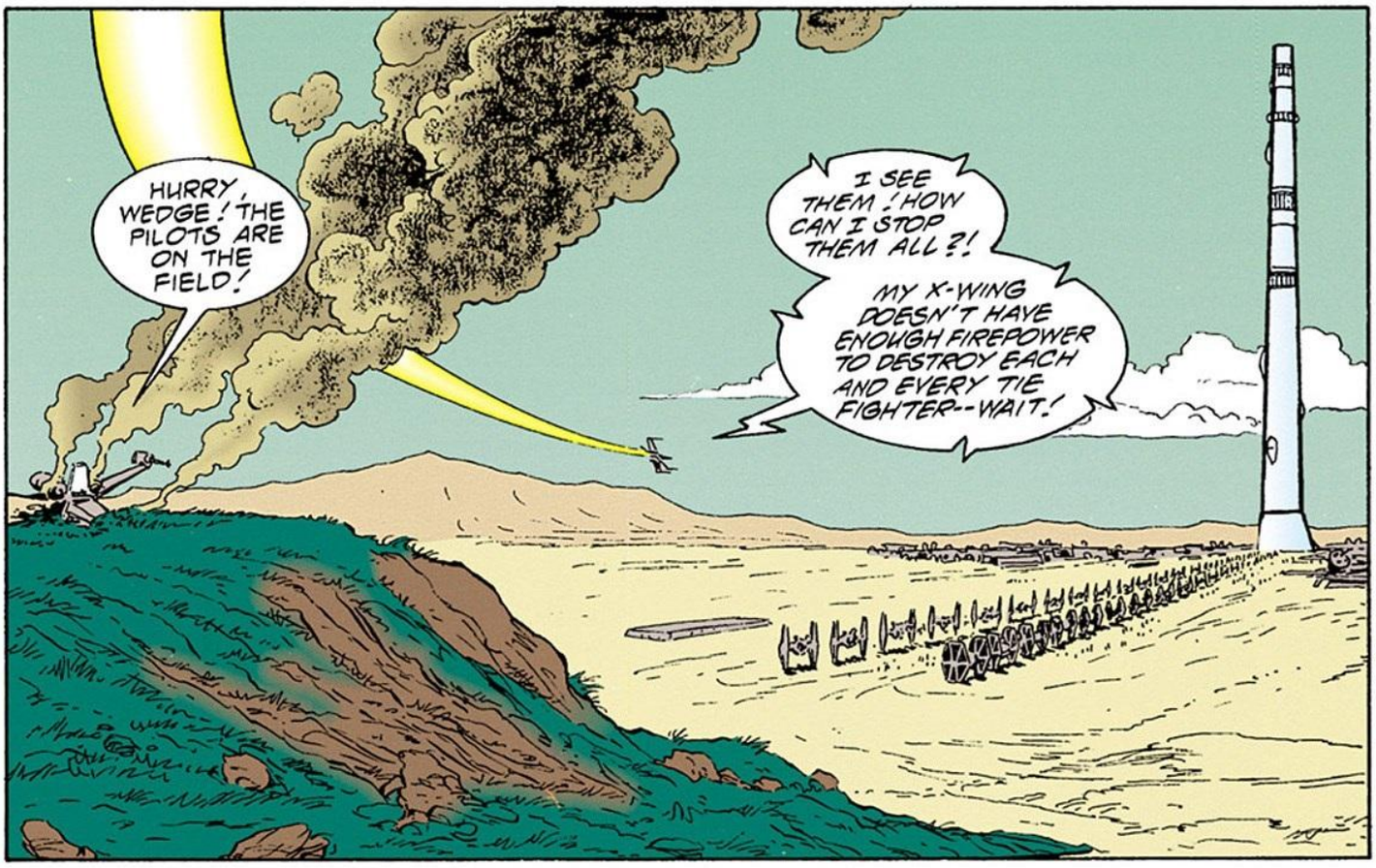
MY THRUSTERS ARE FRIED, WEDGE! I'M AIMING FOR A SMALL FIELD, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE I'M GOING TO--


KRASSH!


RED SEVEN! COME IN! DO YOU READ ME?!
I'M OKAY, WEDGE, BUT MY SHIP--OH, NO!
WHAT IS IT?

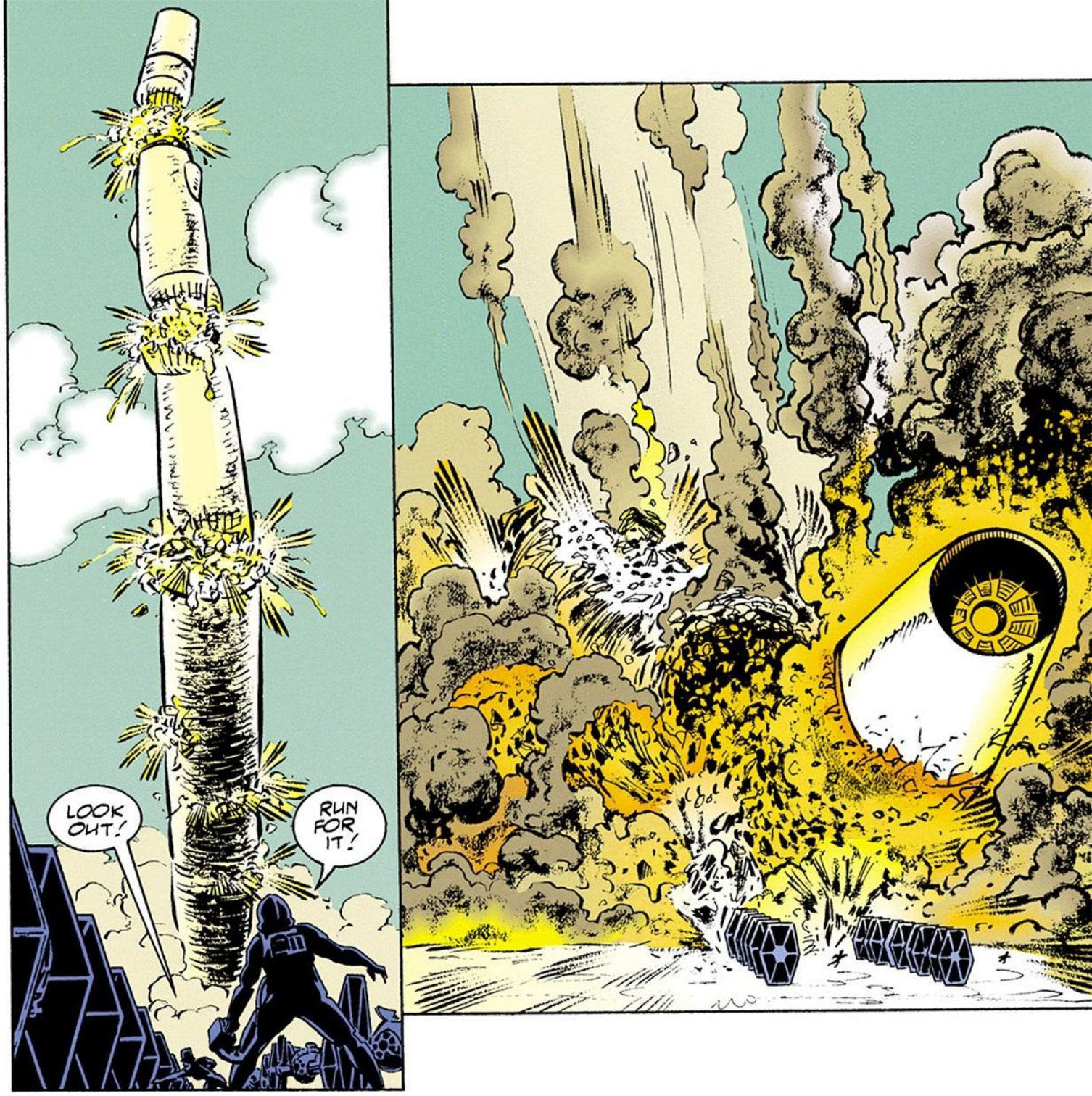

I'VE CRASHED NEAR A TIE FIGHTER LANDING STRIP! THERE MUST BE A HUNDRED OF THEM!
IF THE IMPERIAL PILOTS REACH THESE SHIPS--
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME, RED SEVEN...

...THAT'S MORE TIE FIGHTERS THAN WE CAN HANDLE!
I'M ON MY WAY!


HURRY, WEDGE! THE PILOTS ARE ON THE FIELD!
I SEE THEM! HOW CAN I STOP THEM ALL?!
MY X-WING DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH FIREPOWER TO DESTROY EACH AND EVERY TIE FIGHTER--WAIT!

THE TOWER--IT'S MY ONLY CHANCE!

KATHOOM


LOOK OUT!
RUN FOR IT!

RED LEADER! WE'VE CAPTURED GRAND MOFF NIVERS AND ROUNDED UP THE IMPERIALS, BUT... THE CITIZENS DON'T SEEM TOO PLEASED!
WHAT?! HANG ON, I'M COMING IN FOR A LANDING!

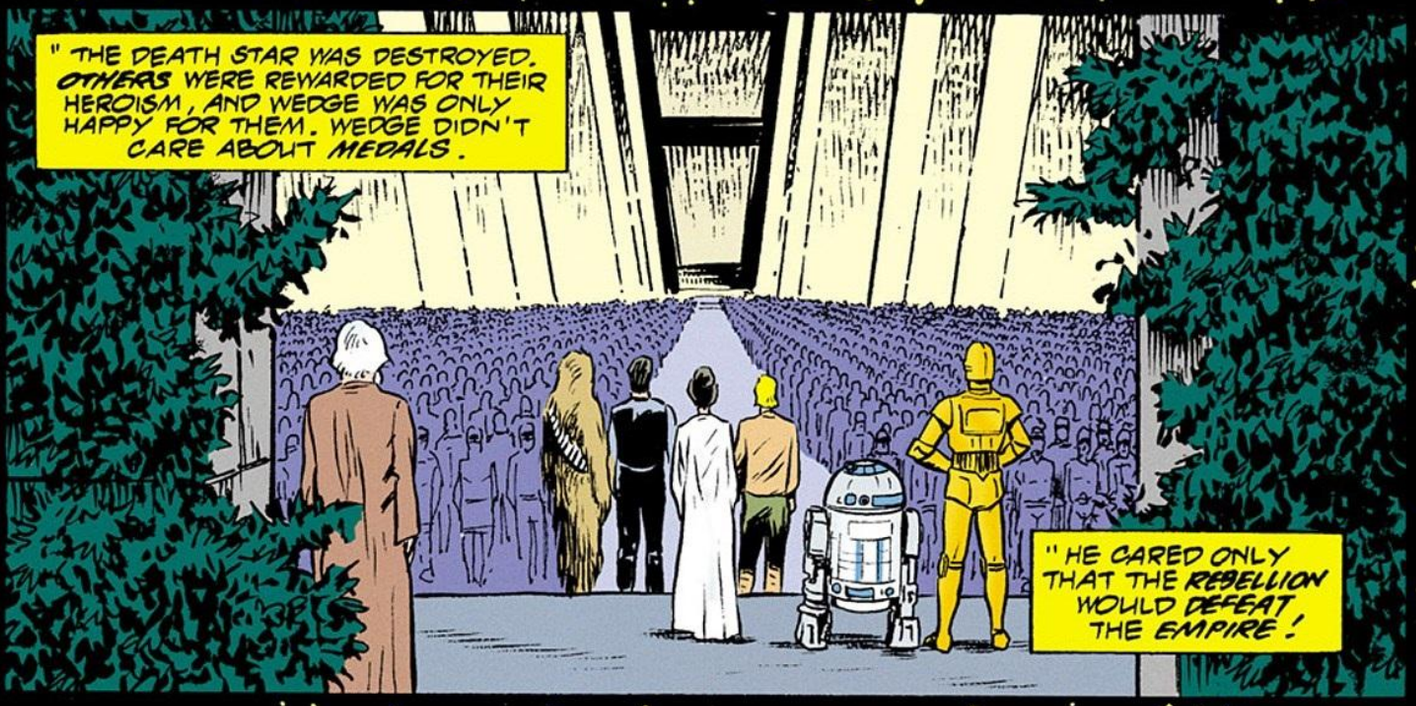
WELL, HERE I AM, RED FIVE! WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
PLEASE! CALM YOURSELVES!
THAT FIEND! HE DESTROYED OUR PEOPLES' GREATEST MONUMENT!

MONUMENT--?! THE TOWER? I'M SORRY... I DIDN'T KNOW! BUT IF I HADN'T--
YOU REBELS ARE WORSE THAN THE IMPERIALS!
TAKE A WALK, WEDGE. LET ME TALK WITH THESE PEOPLE.

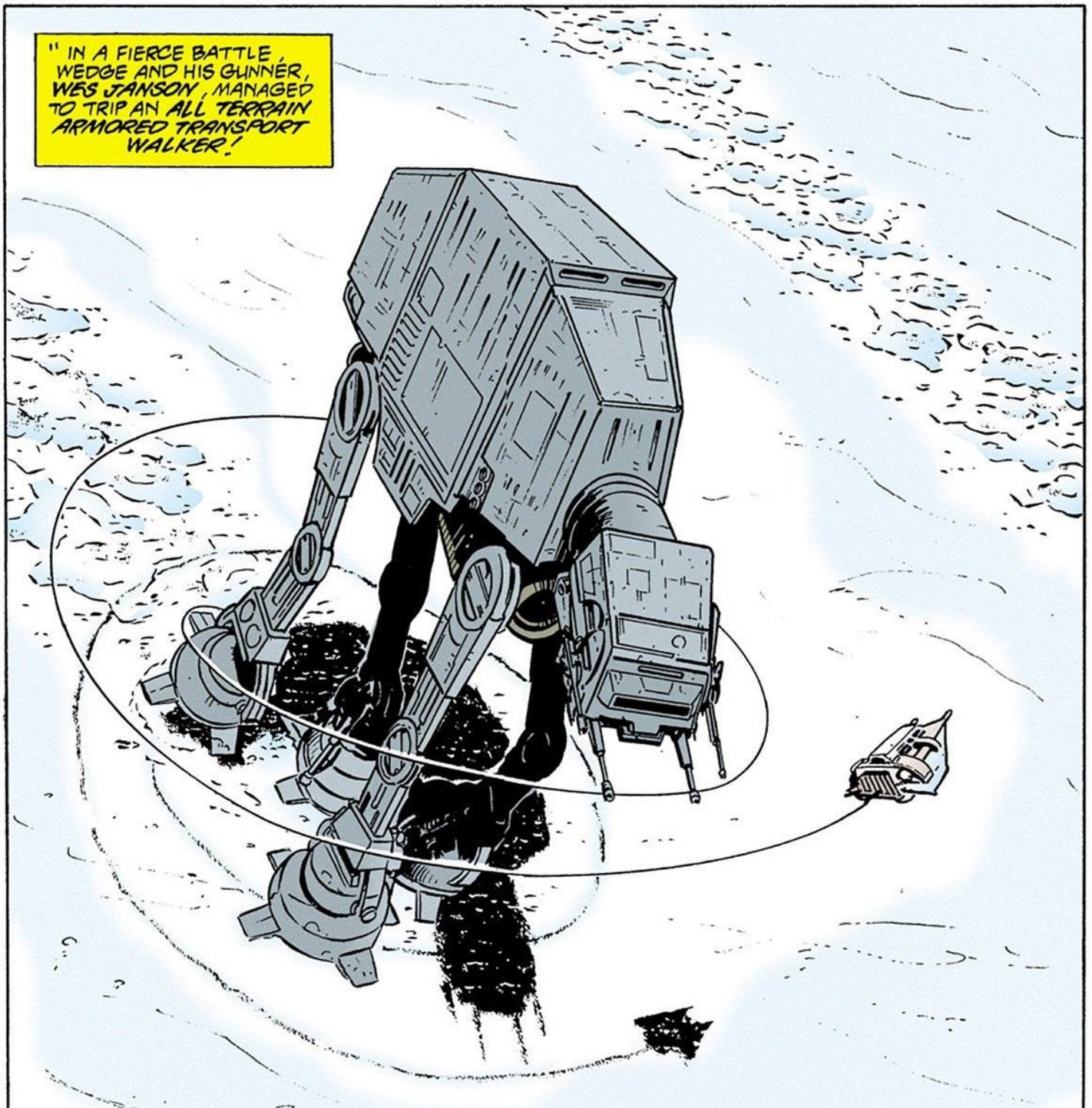
CITIZENS OF TANDANKIN! YOU SHOULD KNOW A FEW THINGS ABOUT WEDGE ANTILLES...

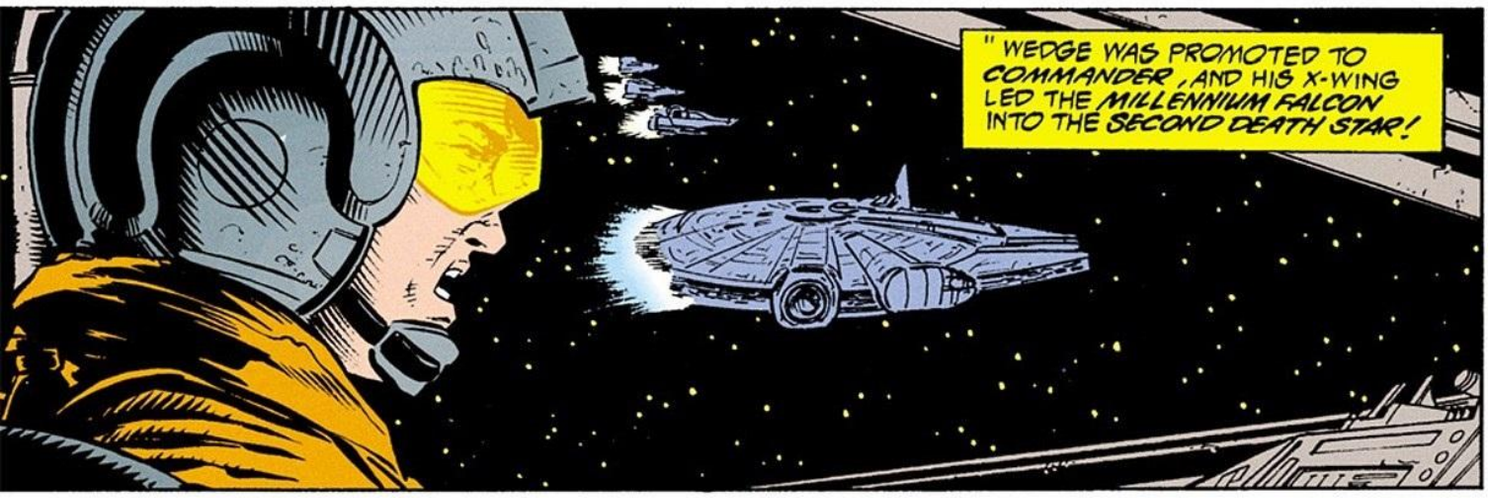
" WEDGE FLEW AN X-WING IN THE ATTACK ON THE FIRST DEATH STAR. HE DESTROYED CANNON TOWERS AND SEVERAL TIE FIGHTERS...

"...BEFORE HIS SHIP TOOK A DIRECT HIT FROM DARTH VADER. FORTUNATELY FOR US, WEDGE SURVIVED!


" THE DEATH STAR WAS DESTROYED. OTHERS WERE REWARDED FOR THEIR HEROISM, AND WEDGE WAS ONLY HAPPY FOR THEM. WEDGE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT MEDALS.
" HE CARED ONLY THAT THE REBELLION WOULD DEFEAT THE EMPIRE!

" WHEN THE ALLIANCE MOVED TO THE PLANET HOTH, WEDGE LEARNED HOW TO FLY A COMBAT SNOWSPEEDER.


" IN A FIERCE BATTLE, WEDGE AND HIS GUNNER, WES JANSON, MANAGED TO TRIP AN ALL TERRAIN ARMORED TRANSPORT WALKER!

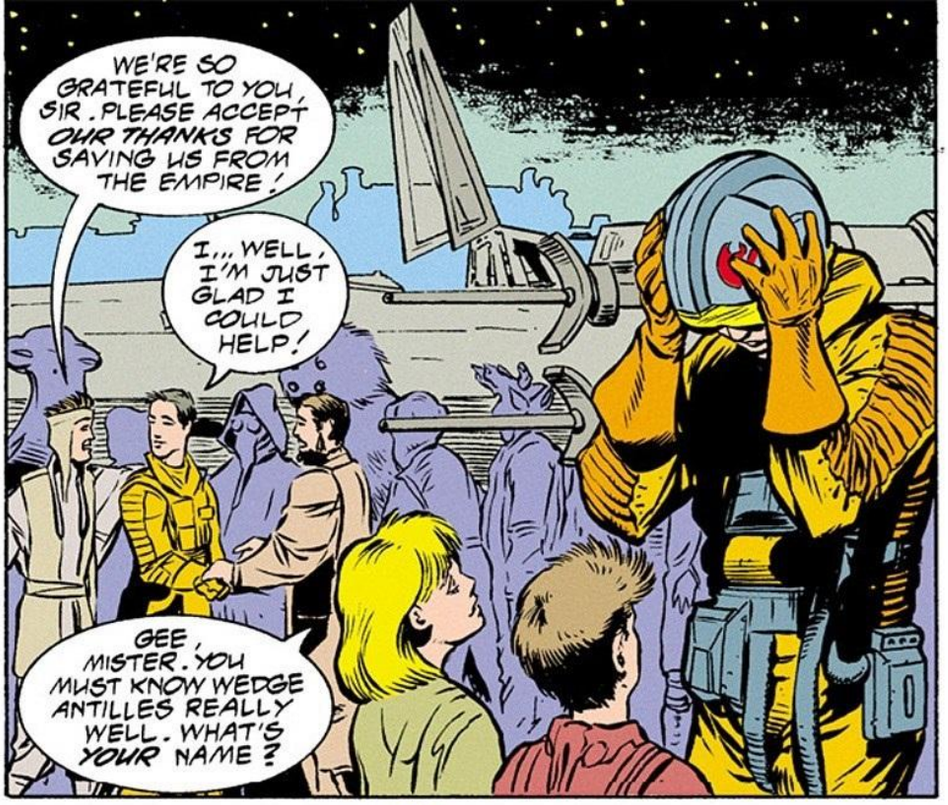

" WEDGE WAS PROMOTED TO COMMANDER, AND HIS X-WING LED THE MILLENNIUM FALCON INTO THE SECOND DEATH STAR!

" WEDGE TARGETED THE POWER REGULATOR WITH MISSILES, AND LANDO CALRISSIAN TORPEDOED THE MAIN REACTOR.

" WEDGE AND LANDO BARELY ESCAPED THE EXPLOSION OF THE MASSIVE DEATH STAR. IF IT WEREN'T FOR THESE BRAVE REBELS DOING WHATEVER IT TAKES TO FIGHT THE EMPIRE...

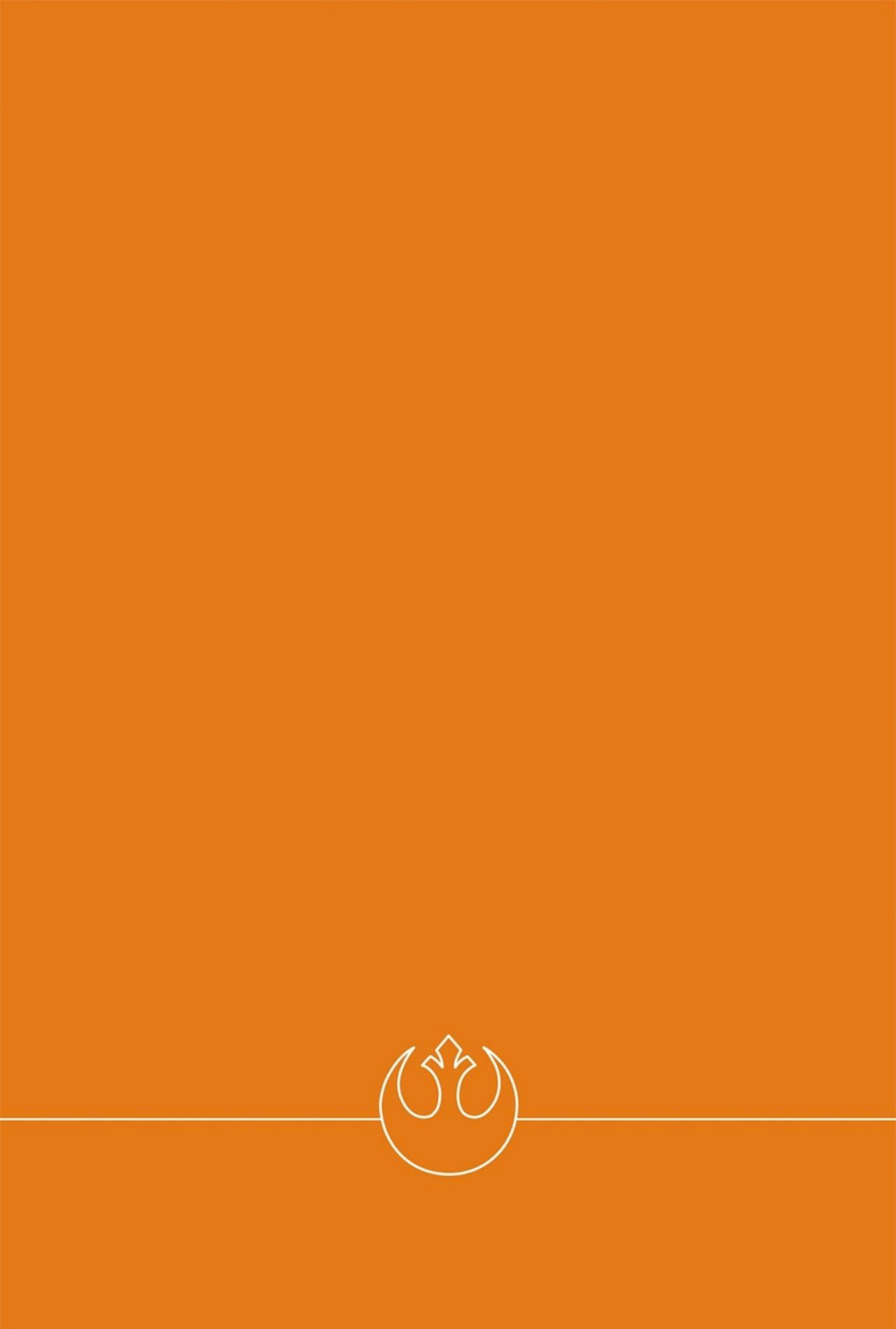
...YOU WOULD HAVE LOST MUCH MORE THAN YOUR MONUMENT.
THANKS TO WEDGE ANTILLES, YOU HAVE YOUR FREEDOM!
YOU'RE RIGHT! COMMANDER ANTILLES DID WHAT HE HAD TO DO... FOR US!

I WISH THOSE PEOPLE KNEW I WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP--
COMMANDER ANTILLES!


WE'RE SO GRATEFUL TO YOU, SIR. PLEASE ACCEPT OUR THANKS FOR SAVING US FROM THE EMPIRE!
I... WELL, I'M JUST GLAD I COULD HELP!
GEE, MISTER. YOU MUST KNOW WEDGE ANTILLES REALLY WELL. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

LUKE SKYWALKER, AT YOUR SERVICE!

COME ALONG, ARTOO. YOU AND SEE-THREEPIO COULD PROBABLY USE A GOOD OIL BATH!
BWOOO! BEEP-OOP!



Battleground: Tatooine | illustration by Mark Harrison

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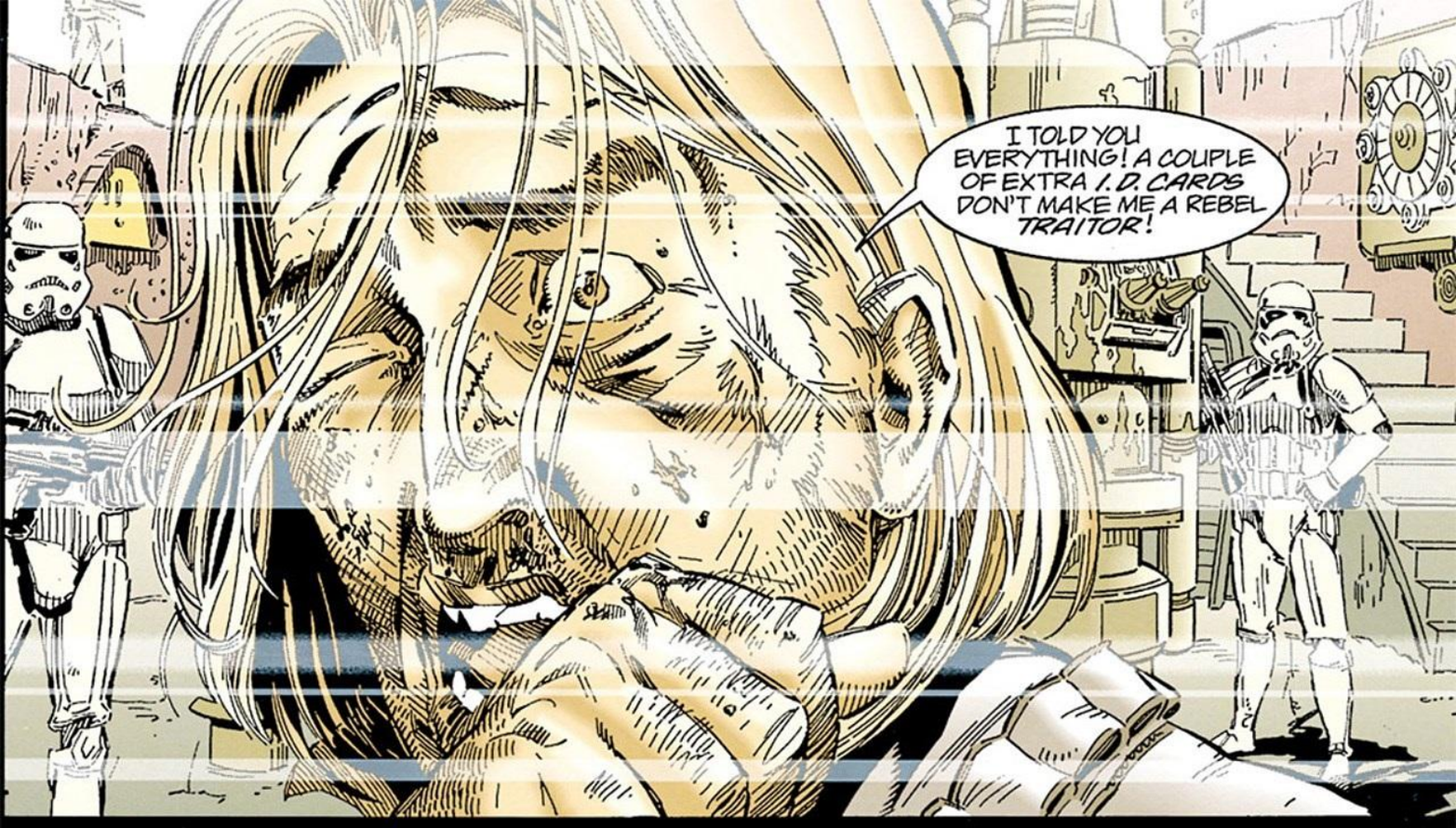
Approximately six months after the Battle of Endor . . .

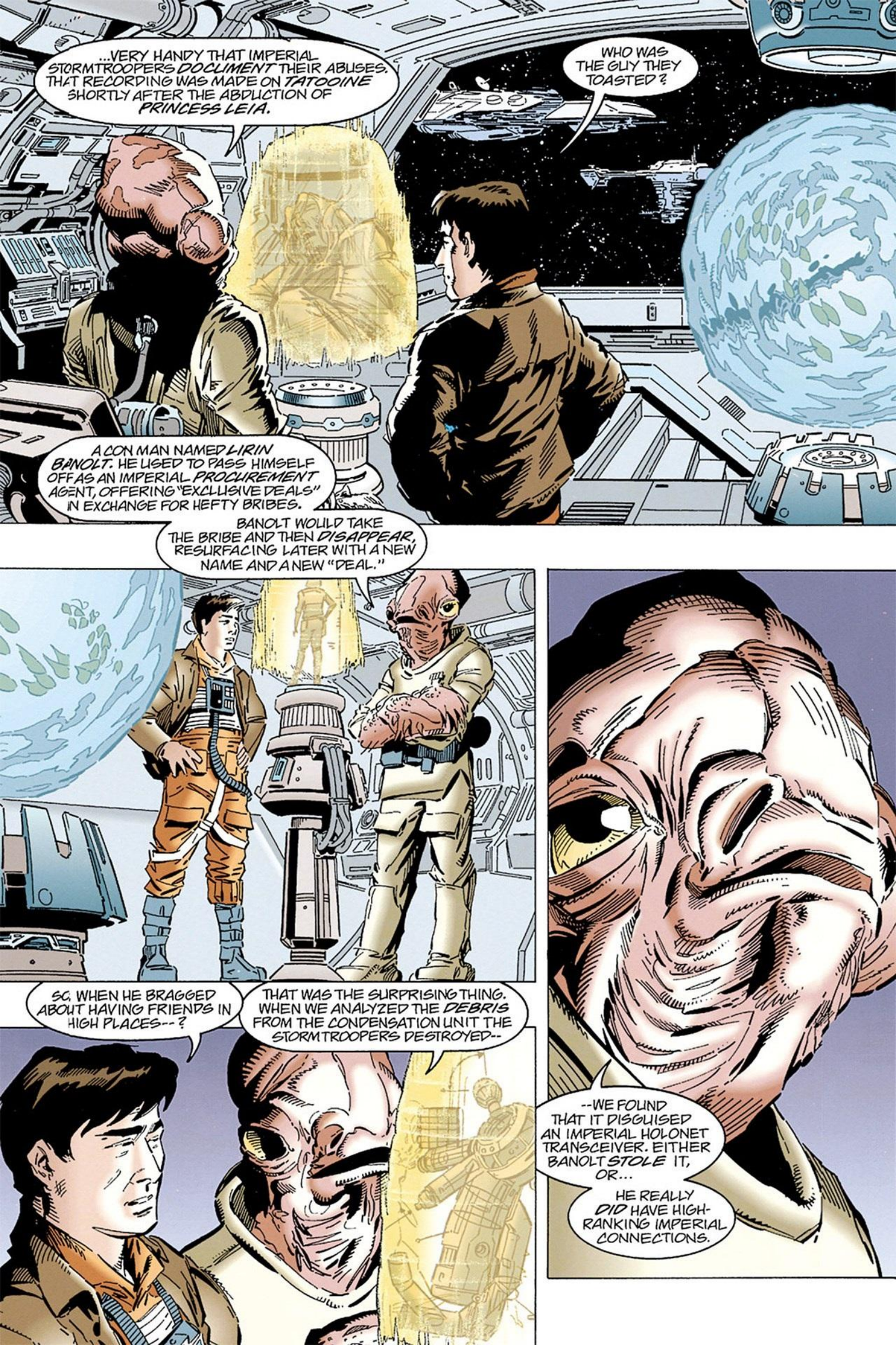
story by Michael A. Stackpole
script by Jan Strnad
pencils by John Nadeau
inks by Jordi Ensign
colors by Dave Nestelle, Perry McNamee
letters by Vickie Williams

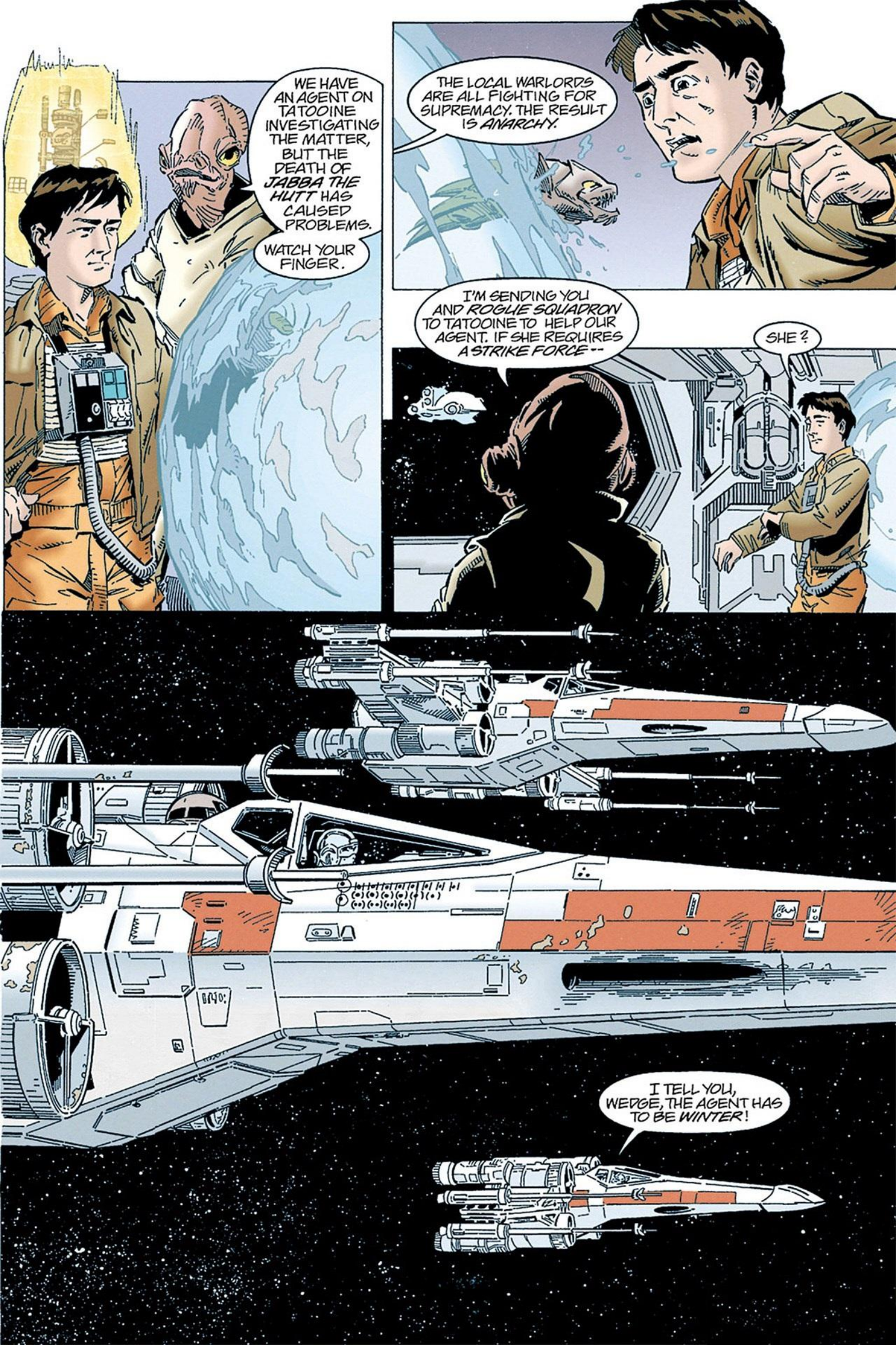

I TOLD YOU EVERYTHING! A COUPLE OF EXTRA I.D. CARDS DON'T MAKE ME A REBEL TRAITOR!

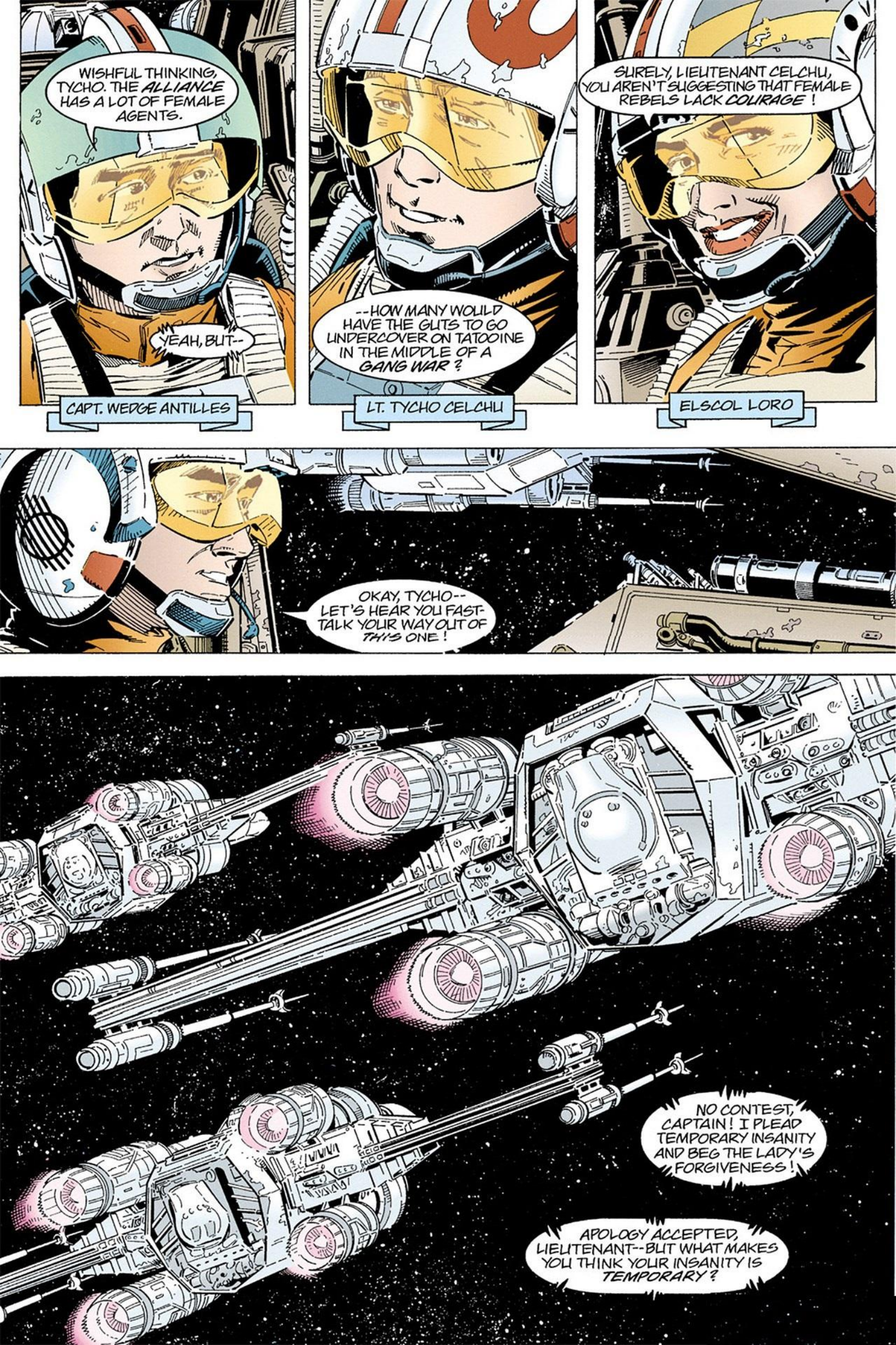
WHAPP!

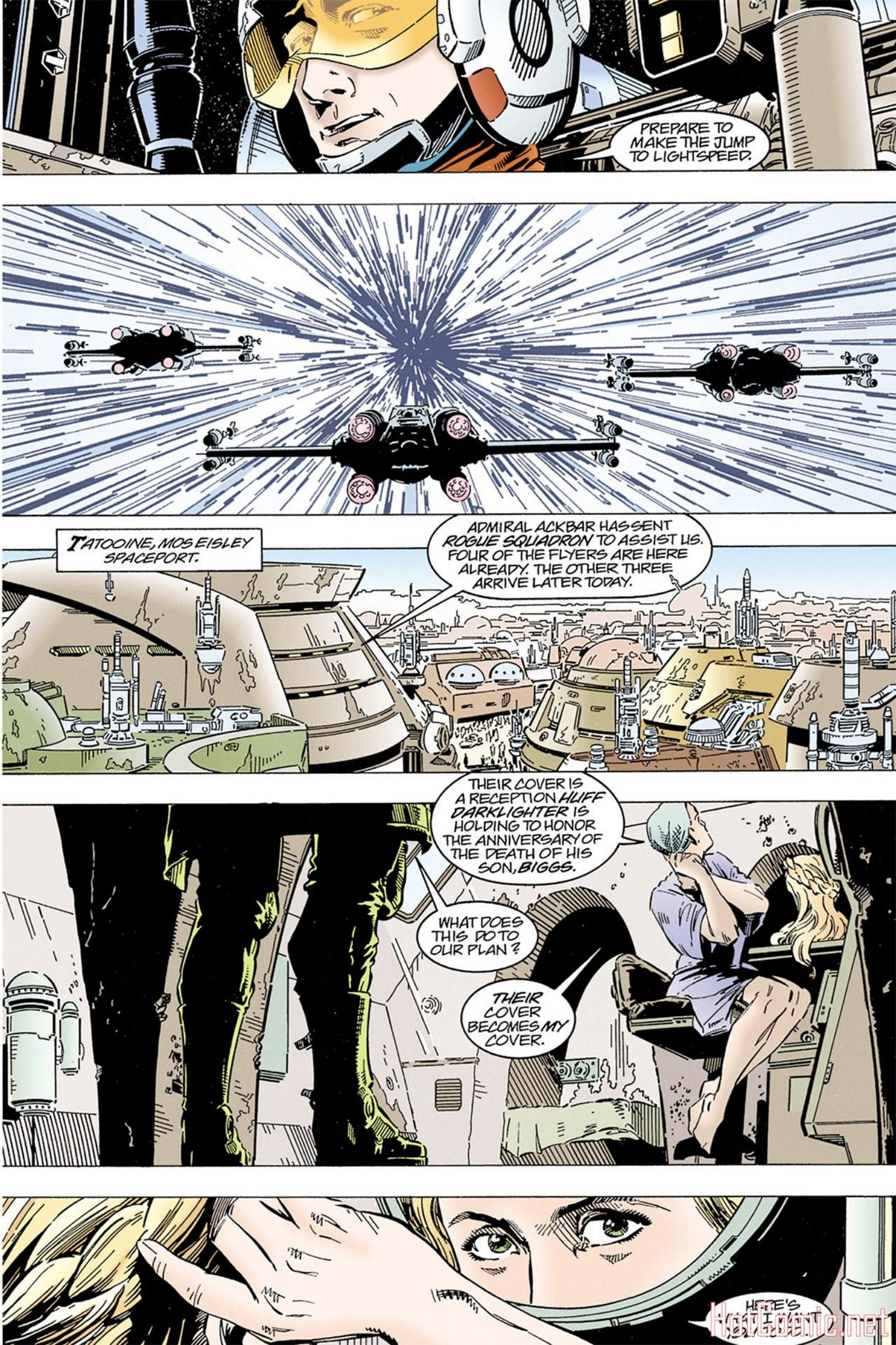
YOU'LL REGRET THIS INSULT! I HAVE FRIENDS...RANKING FRIENDS IN THE EMPIRE!
THIS ONE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING.

NO! DON'T! I SWEAR...I'M LOYAL TO THE EMPEROR!


...VERY HANDY THAT IMPERIAL STORMTROOPERS DOCUMENT THEIR ABUSES. THAT RECORDING WAS MADE ON TATOOINE SHORTLY AFTER THE ABDUCTION OF PRINCESS LEIA.
WHO WAS THE GUY THEY TOASTED?
A CON MAN NAMED LIRIN BANOLT. HE USED TO PASS HIMSELF OFF AS AN IMPERIAL PROCUREMENT AGENT, OFFERING "EXCLUSIVE DEALS" IN EXCHANGE FOR HEFTY BRIBES.
BANOLT WOULD TAKE THE BRIBE AND THEN DISAPPEAR, RESURFACING LATER WITH A NEW NAME AND A NEW "DEAL."
SO, WHEN HE BRAGGED ABOUT HAVING FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES--?
THAT WAS THE SURPRISING THING. WHEN WE ANALYZED THE DEBRIS FROM THE CONDENSATION UNIT THE STORMTROOPERS DESTROYED--
--WE FOUND THAT IT DISGUISED AN IMPERIAL HOLONET TRANSCEIVER. EITHER BANOLT STOLE IT, OR...
HE REALLY DID HAVE HIGH-RANKING IMPERIAL CONNECTIONS.


WE HAVE AN AGENT ON TATOOINE INVESTIGATING THE MATTER, BUT THE DEATH OF JABBA THE HUTT HAS CAUSED PROBLEMS.
WATCH YOUR FINGER.
THE LOCAL WARLORDS ARE ALL FIGHTING FOR SUPREMACY. THE RESULT IS ANARCHY.
I'M SENDING YOU AND ROGUE SQUADRON TO TATOOINE TO HELP OUR AGENT. IF SHE REQUIRES A STRIKE FORCE--
SHE?
I TELL YOU, WEDGE, THE AGENT HAS TO BE WINTER!


WISHFUL THINKING, TYCHO. THE ALLIANCE HAS A LOT OF FEMALE AGENTS.
YEAH, BUT--
CAPT. WEDGE ANTILLES
--HOW MANY WOULD HAVE THE GUTS TO GO UNDERCOVER ON TATOOINE IN THE MIDDLE OF A GANG WAR?
LT. TYCHO CELCHU
SURELY, LIEUTENANT CELCHU, YOU AREN'T SUGGESTING THAT FEMALE REBELS LACK COURAGE!
ELSCOL LORO
OKAY, TYCHO-- LET'S HEAR YOU FAST-TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS ONE!
NO CONTEST, CAPTAIN! I PLEAD TEMPORARY INSANITY AND BEG THE LADY'S FORGIVENESS!
APOLOGY ACCEPTED, LIEUTENANT--BUT WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOUR INSANITY IS TEMPORARY?



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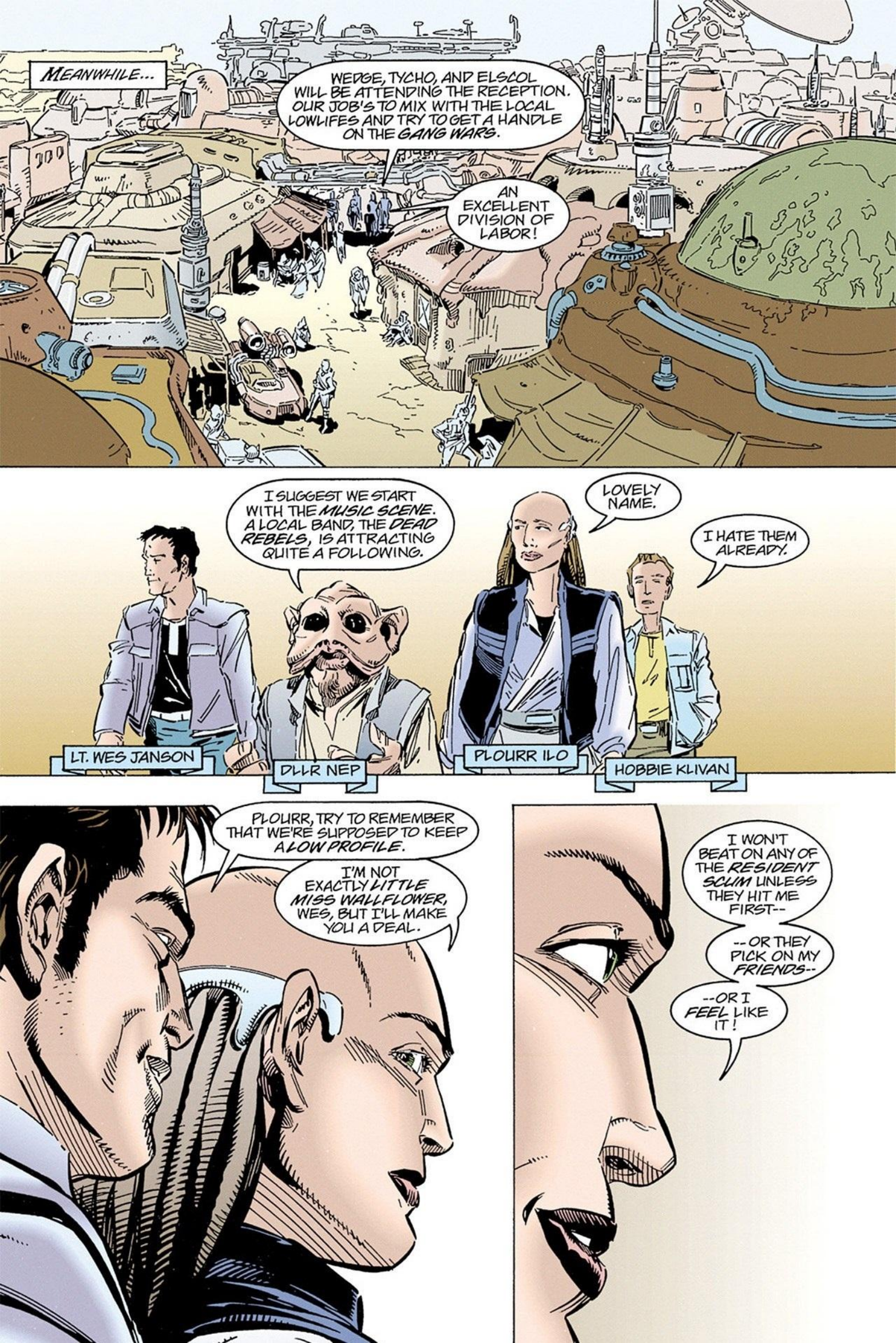
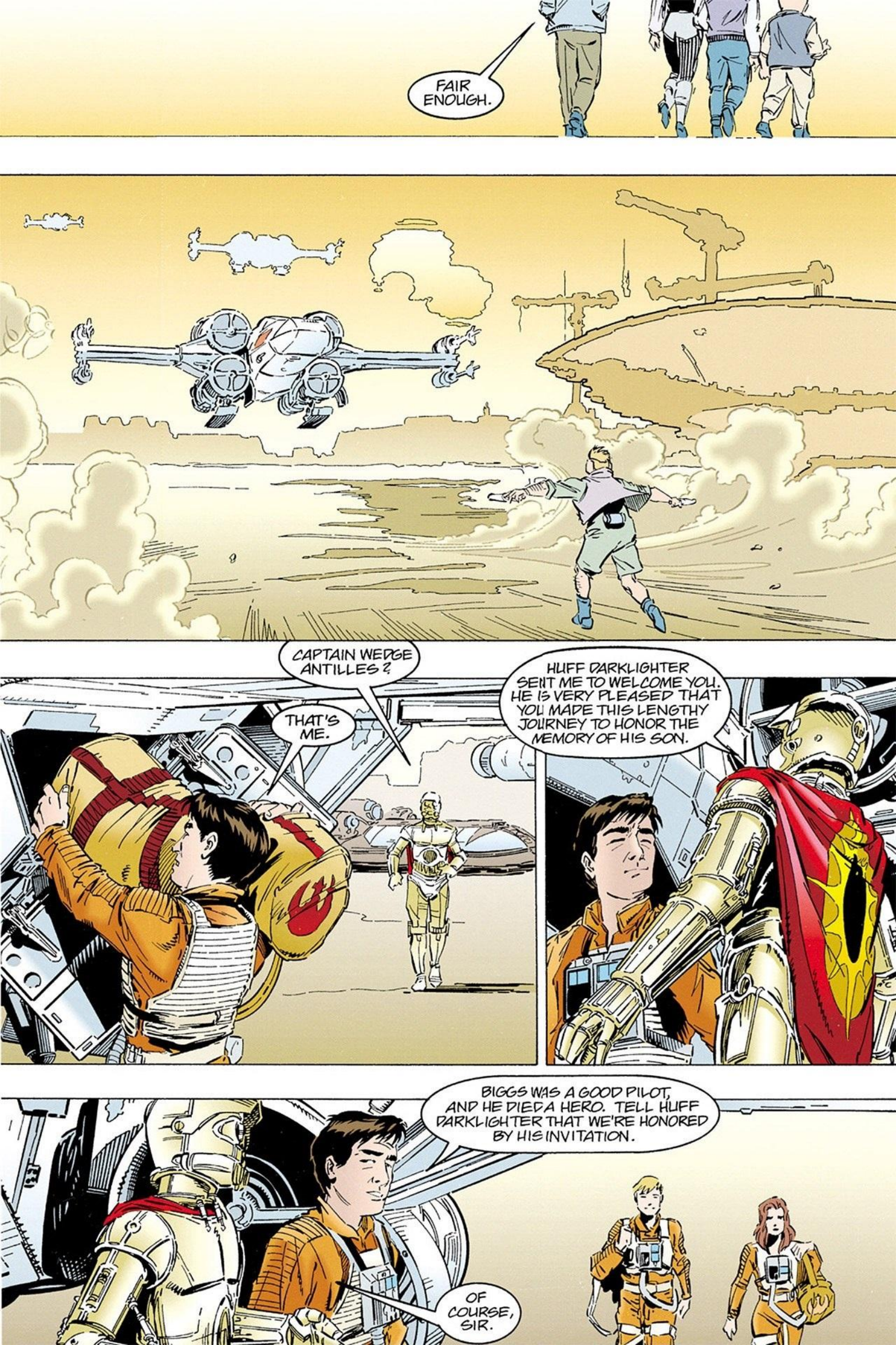
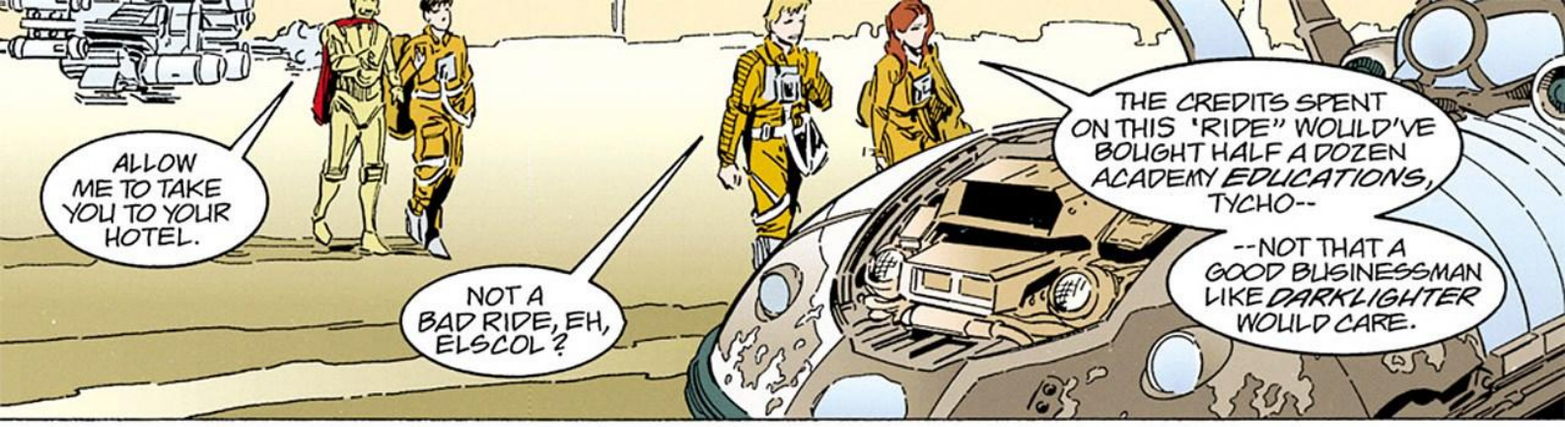
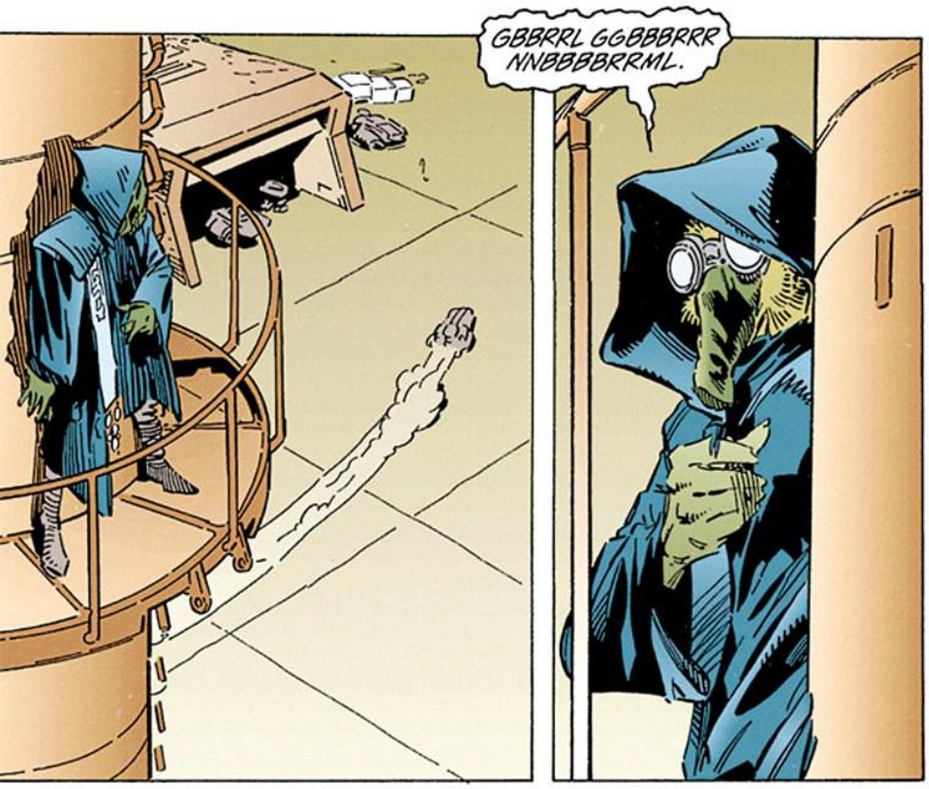

MEANWHILE...
WEDGE, TYCHO, AND ELSCOL WILL BE ATTENDING THE RECEPTION. OUR JOB'S TO MIX WITH THE LOCAL LOWLIFES AND TRY TO GET A HANDLE ON THE GANG WARS.
AN EXCELLENT DIVISION OF LABOR!
I SUGGEST WE START WITH THE MUSIC SCENE. A LOCAL BAND, THE DEAD REBELS, IS ATTRACTING QUITE A FOLLOWING.
LOVELY NAME.
I HATE THEM ALREADY.
LT. WES JANSON
DLLR NEP
PLOURR ILO
HOBBIE KLIVAN
PLOURR, TRY TO REMEMBER THAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE.
I'M NOT EXACTLY LITTLE MISS WALLFLOWER, WES, BUT I'LL MAKE YOU A DEAL.
I WON'T BEAT ON ANY OF THE RESIDENT SCUM UNLESS THEY HIT ME FIRST--
--OR THEY PICK ON MY FRIENDS--
--OR I FEEL LIKE IT!


FAIR ENOUGH.
CAPTAIN WEDGE ANTILLES?
THAT'S ME.
HUFF DARKLIGHTER SENT ME TO WELCOME YOU. HE IS VERY PLEASED THAT YOU MADE THIS LENGTHY JOURNEY TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF HIS SON.
BIGGS WAS A GOOD PILOT, AND HE DIED A HERO. TELL HUFF DARKLIGHTER THAT WE'RE HONORED BY HIS INVITATION.
OF COURSE, SIR.





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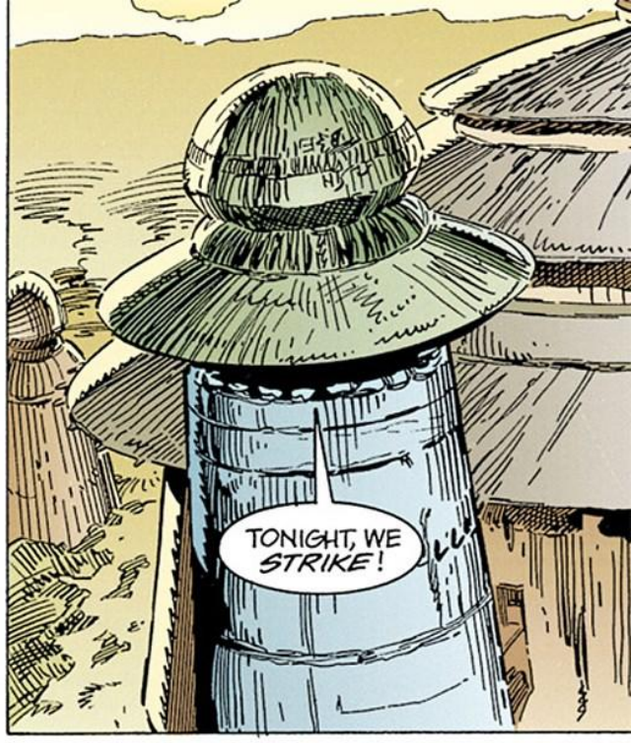

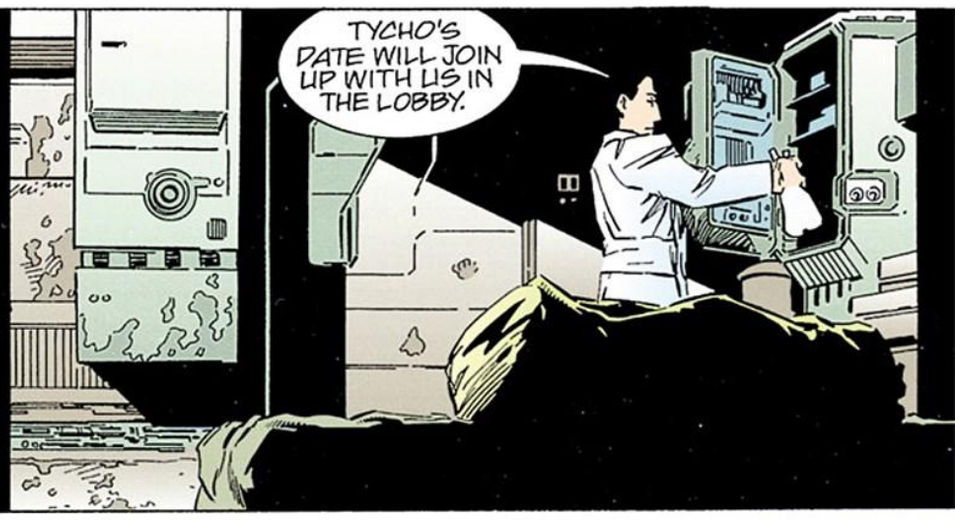

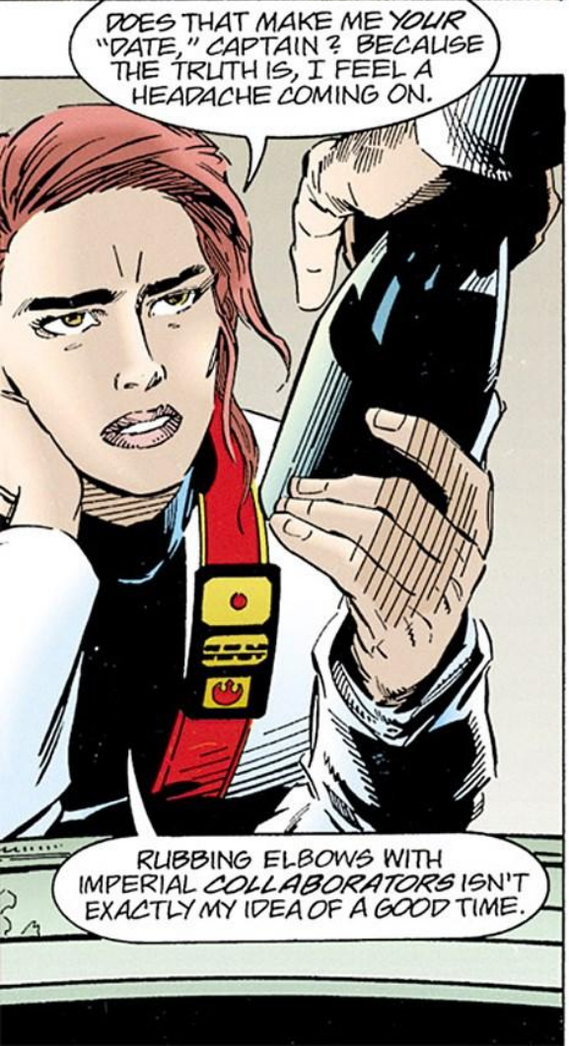

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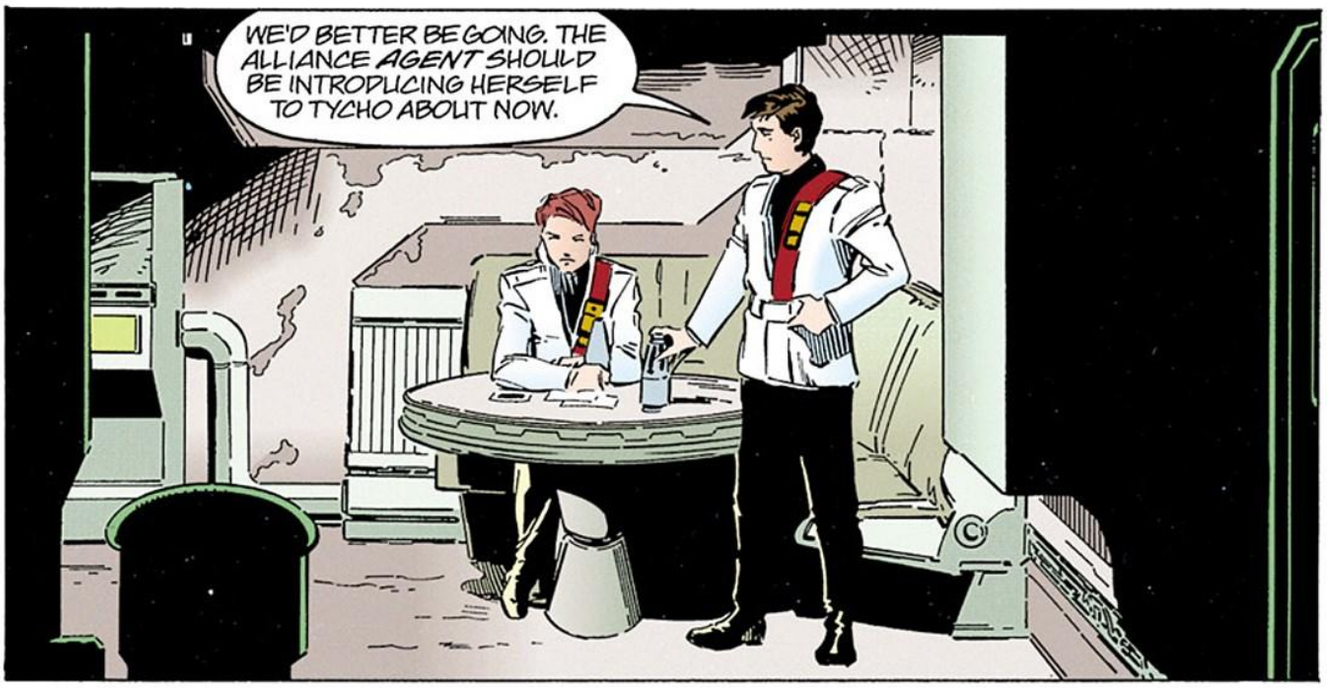

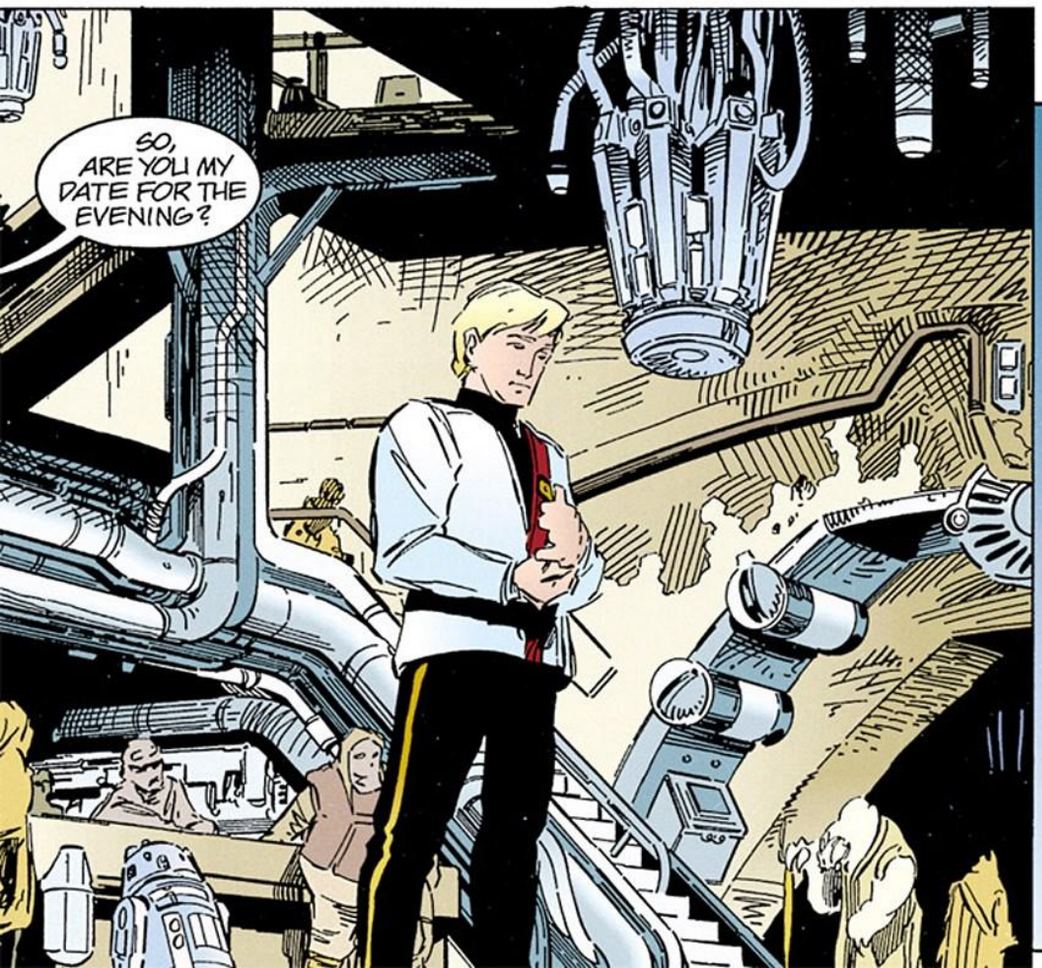

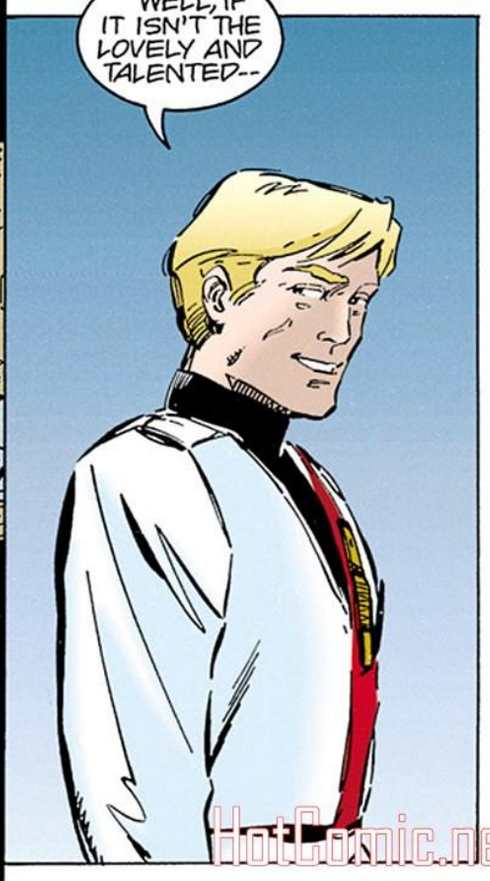

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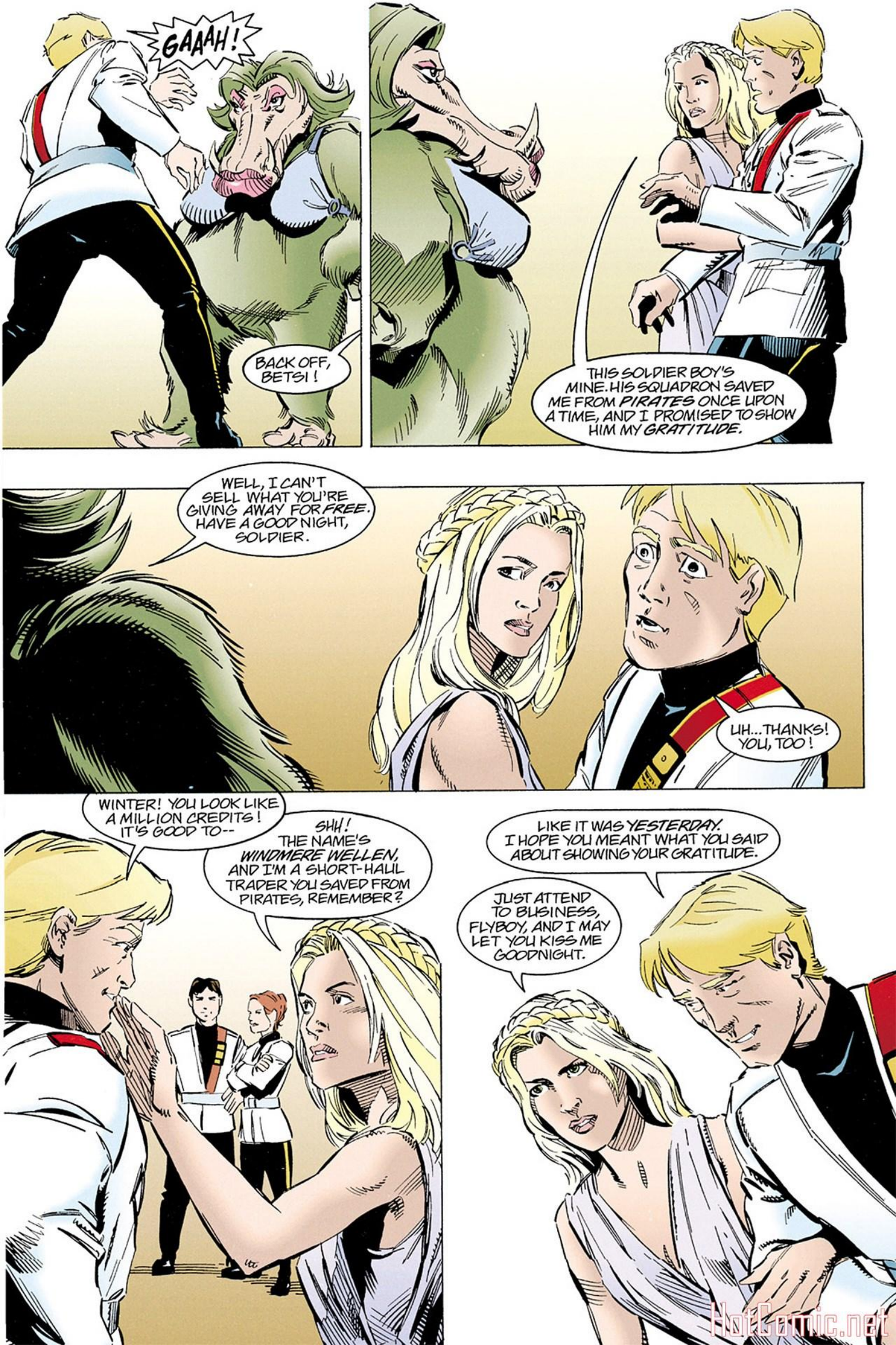

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KRSSH BANG!
KRiiTCHH
ITCH
HANNG
THANG!
HIINNN
WHEEZ
HOOOZ
HNNN
DLLR, I THINK... YES, I'M CERTAIN--

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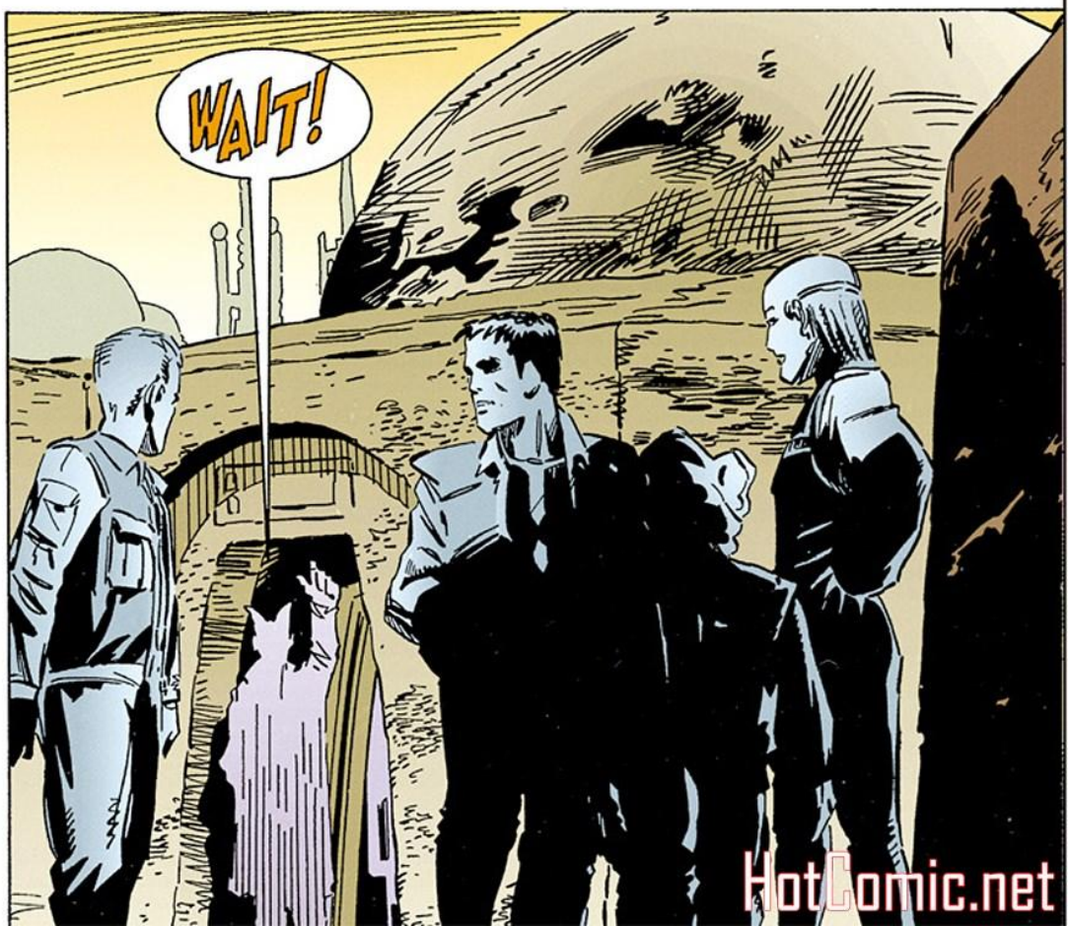

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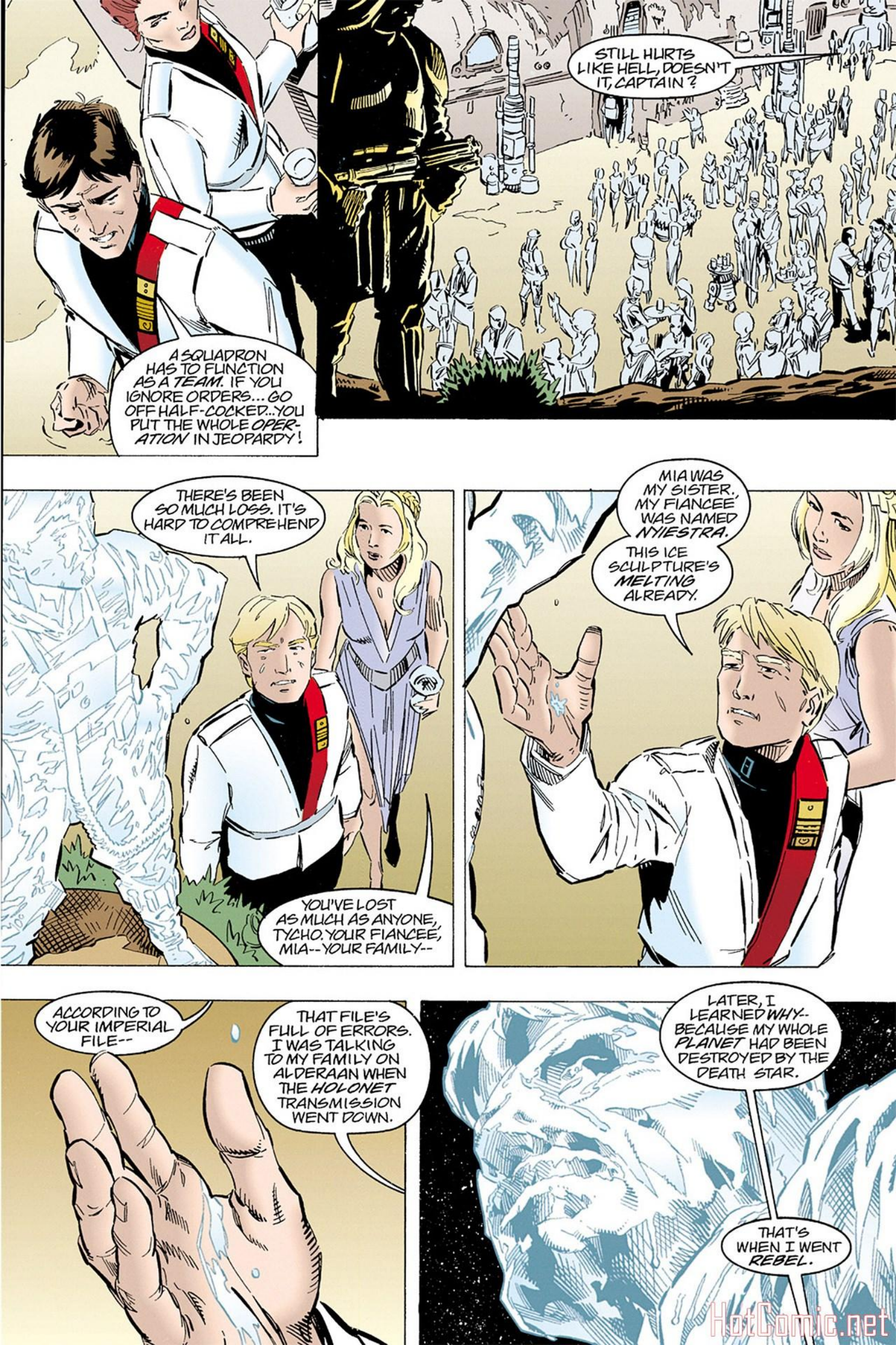

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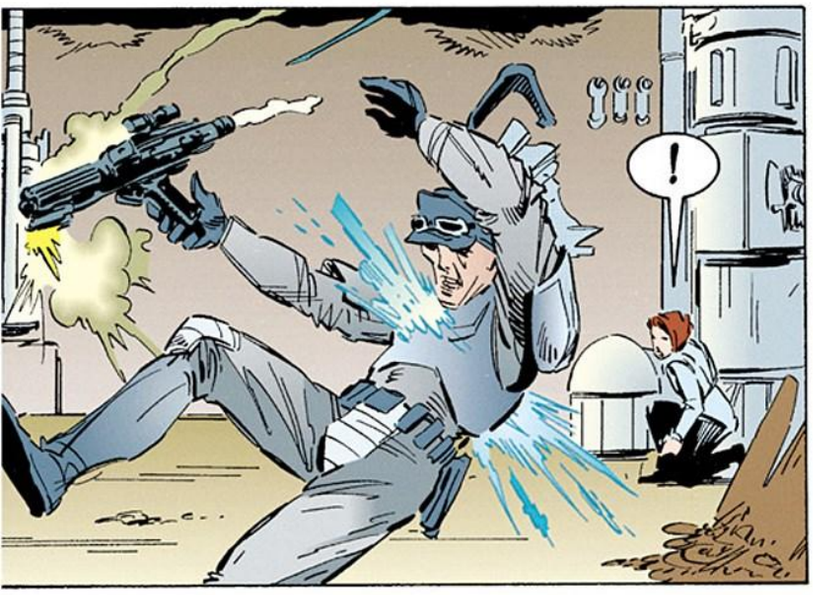

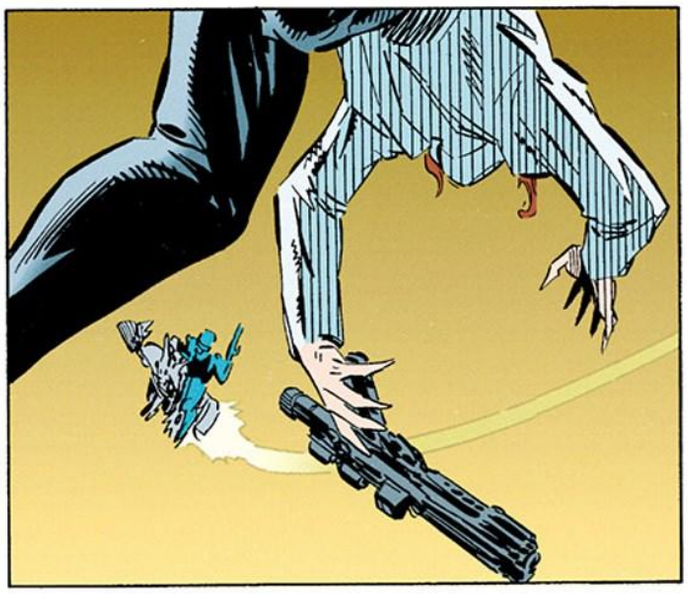

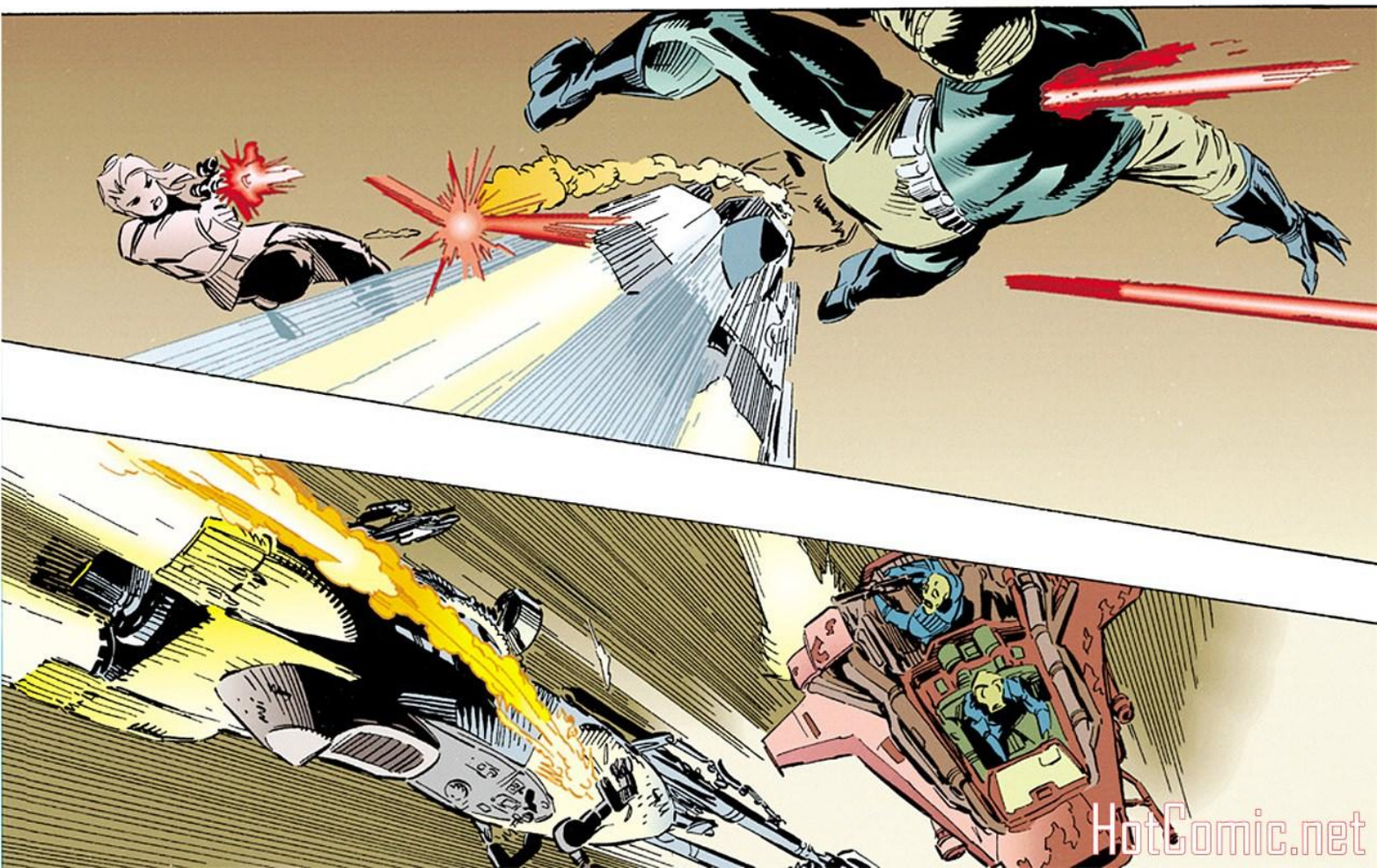

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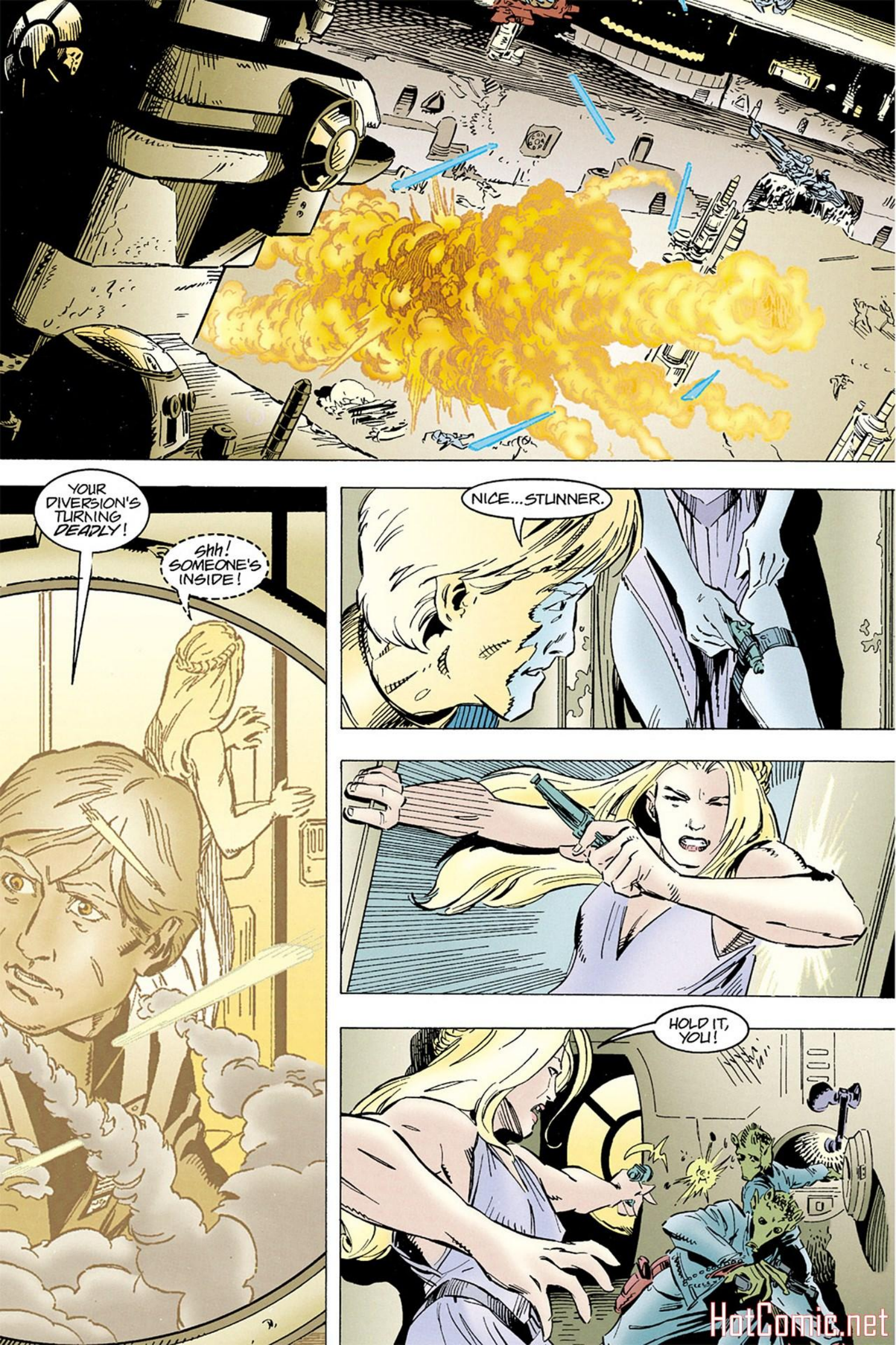

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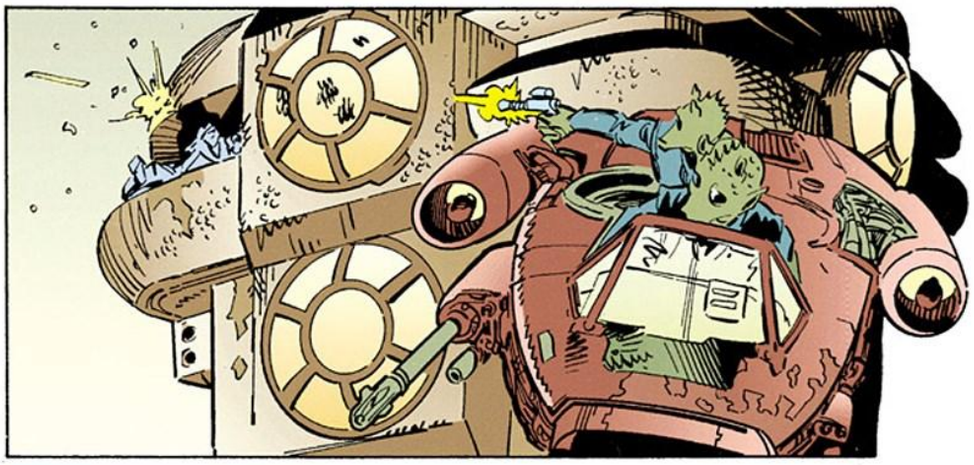

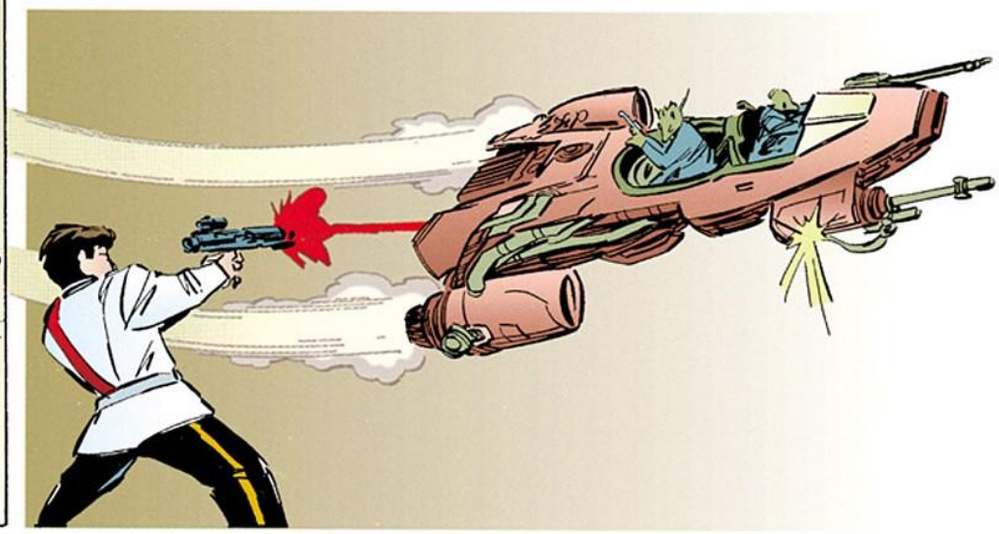

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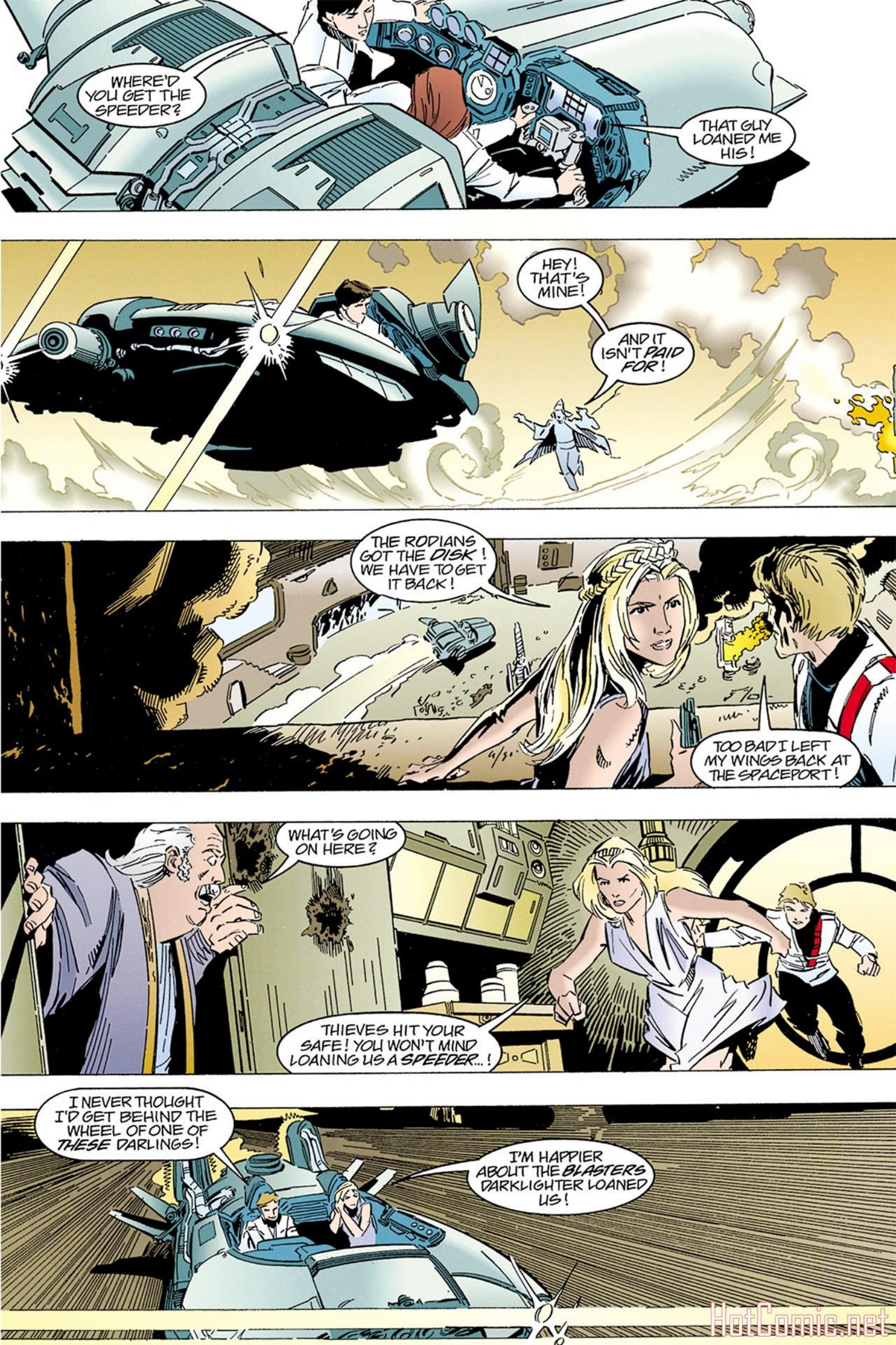

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OBVIOUSLY, THOSE RAIDERS WEREN'T THE DIVERSION I ORDERED! SOMEBODY ELSE WANTS THAT DISK AS BADLY AS I DO!

THAT MUST BE SOME DISK.
IT COULD DETERMINE THE FUTURE OF THE SECTOR. IS THAT IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR YOU?

SAY NO MORE.

DAMN YOU, FIRITH.

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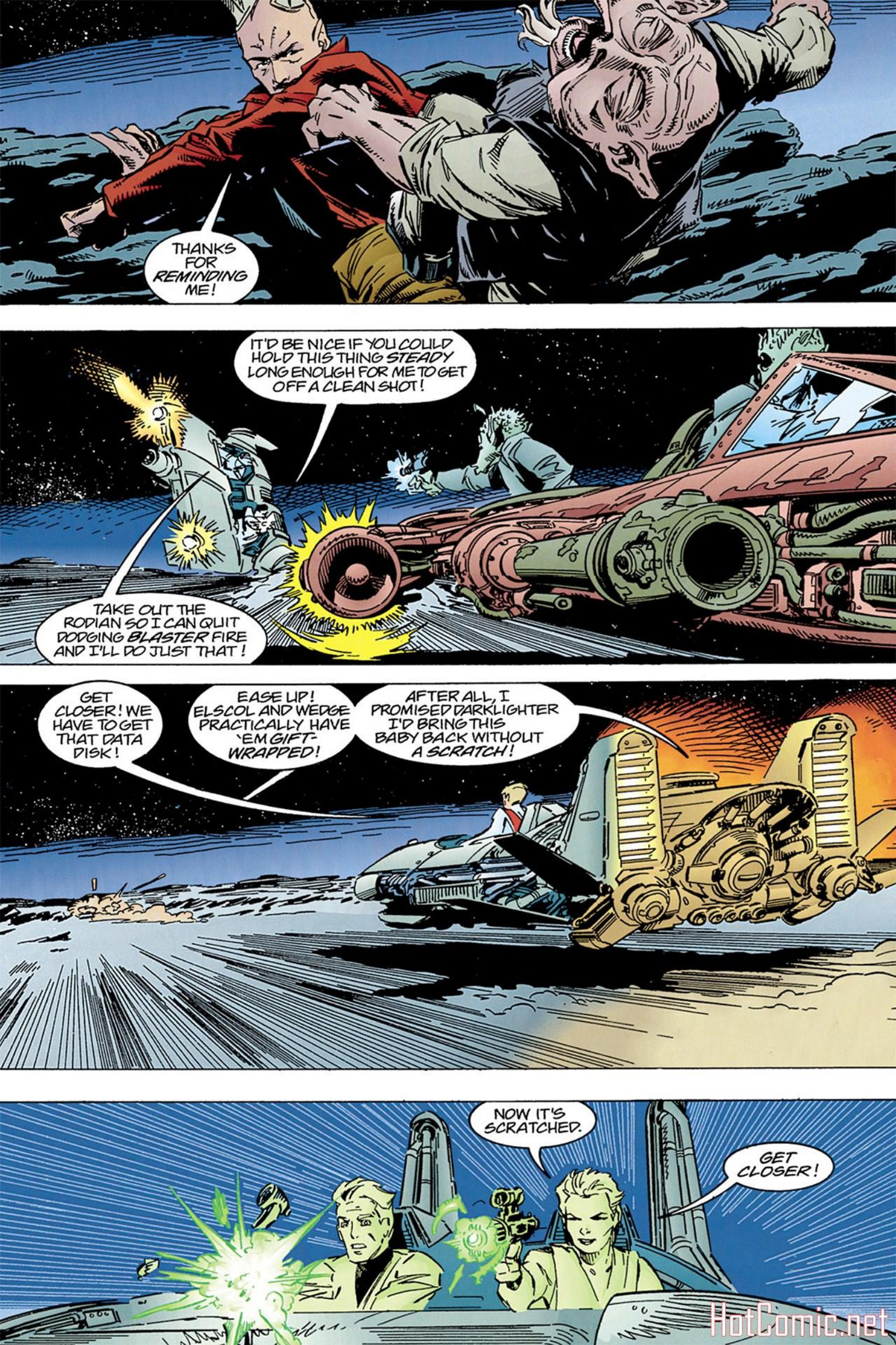

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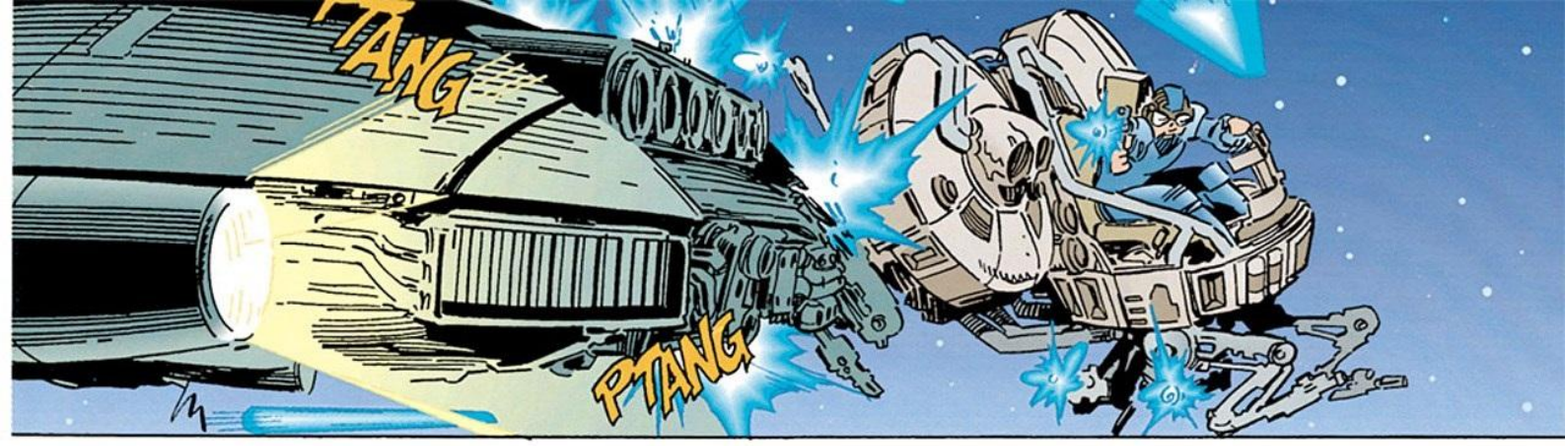
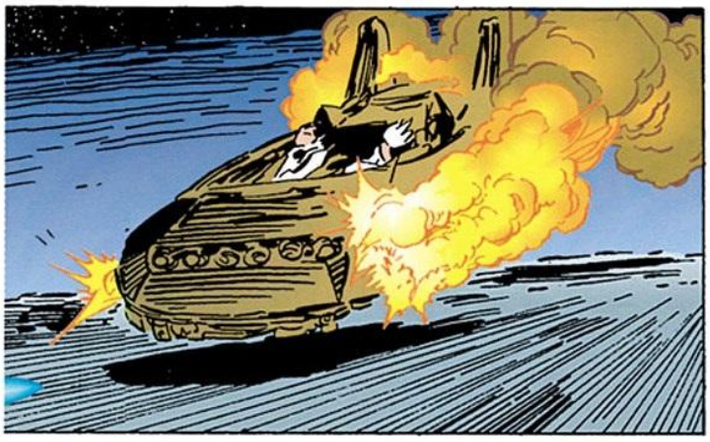
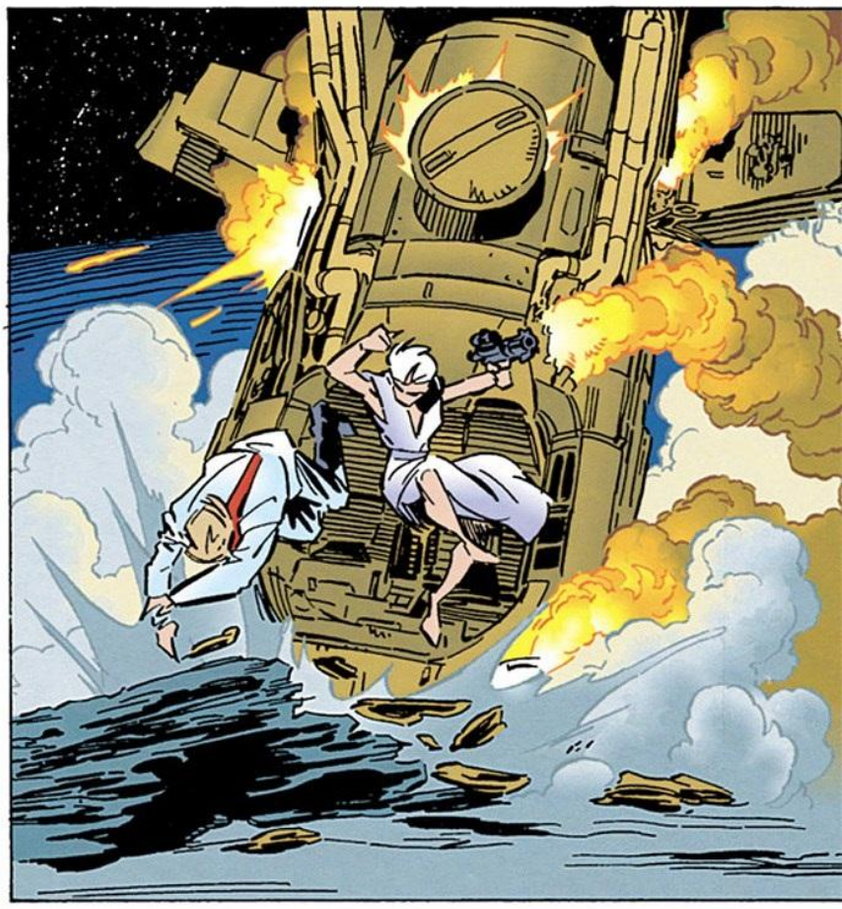

TANG
PTANG





WHUMPF!

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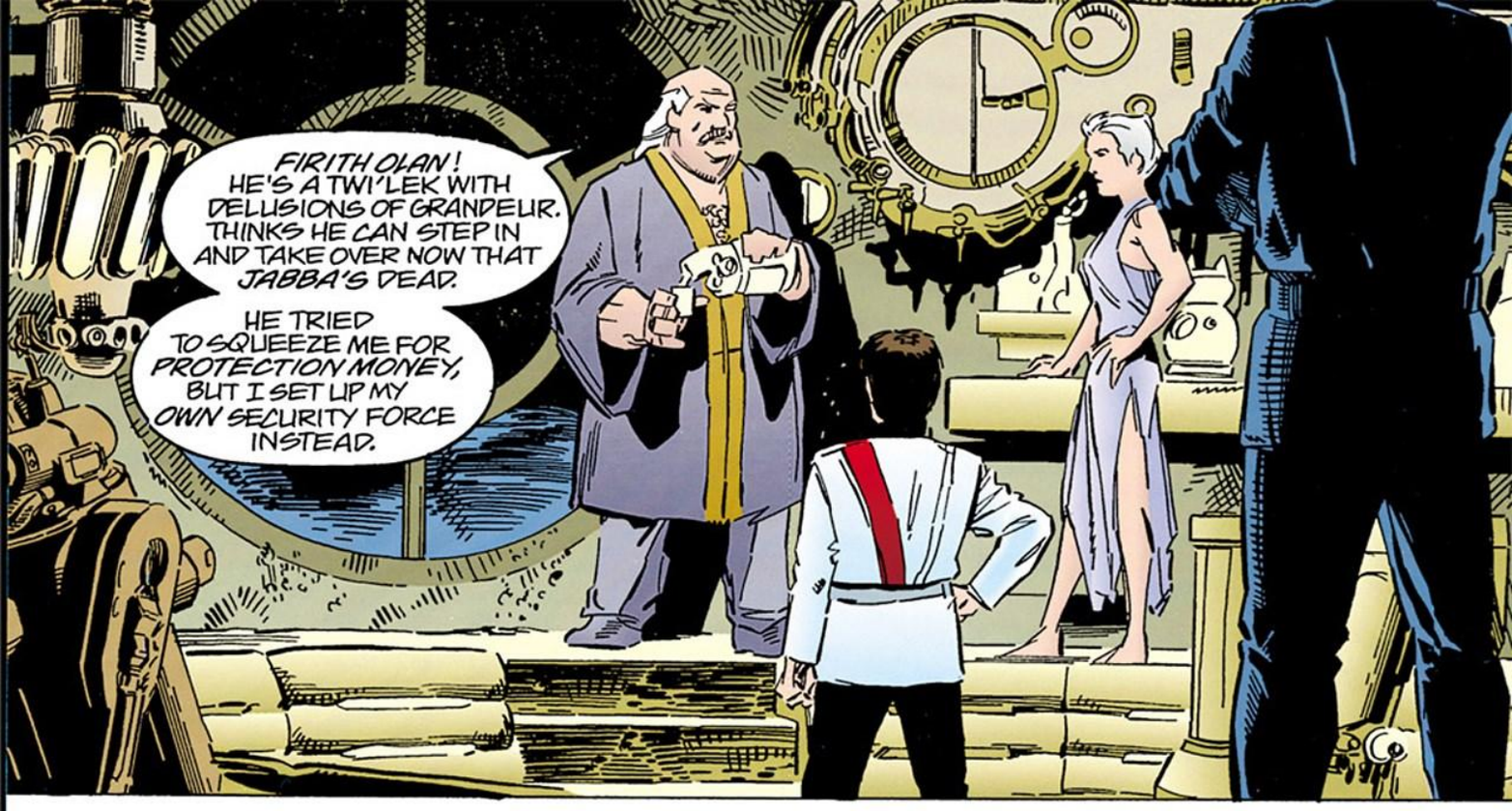

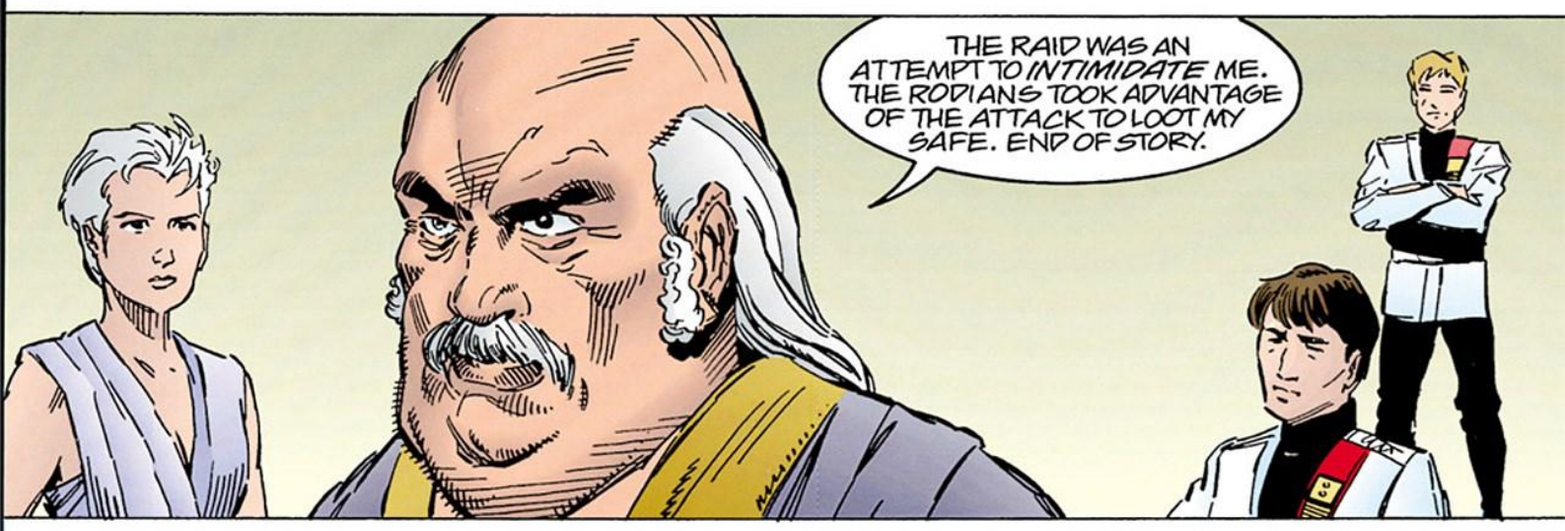

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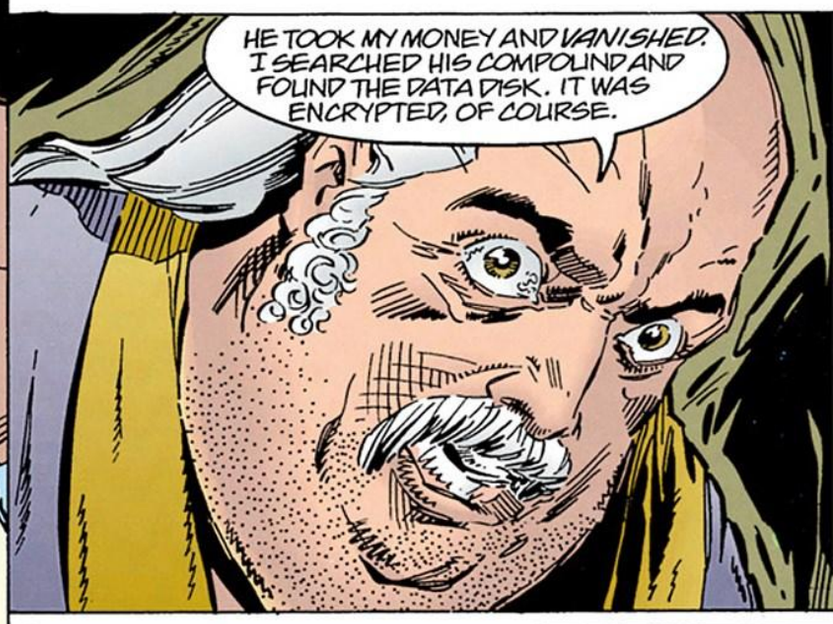

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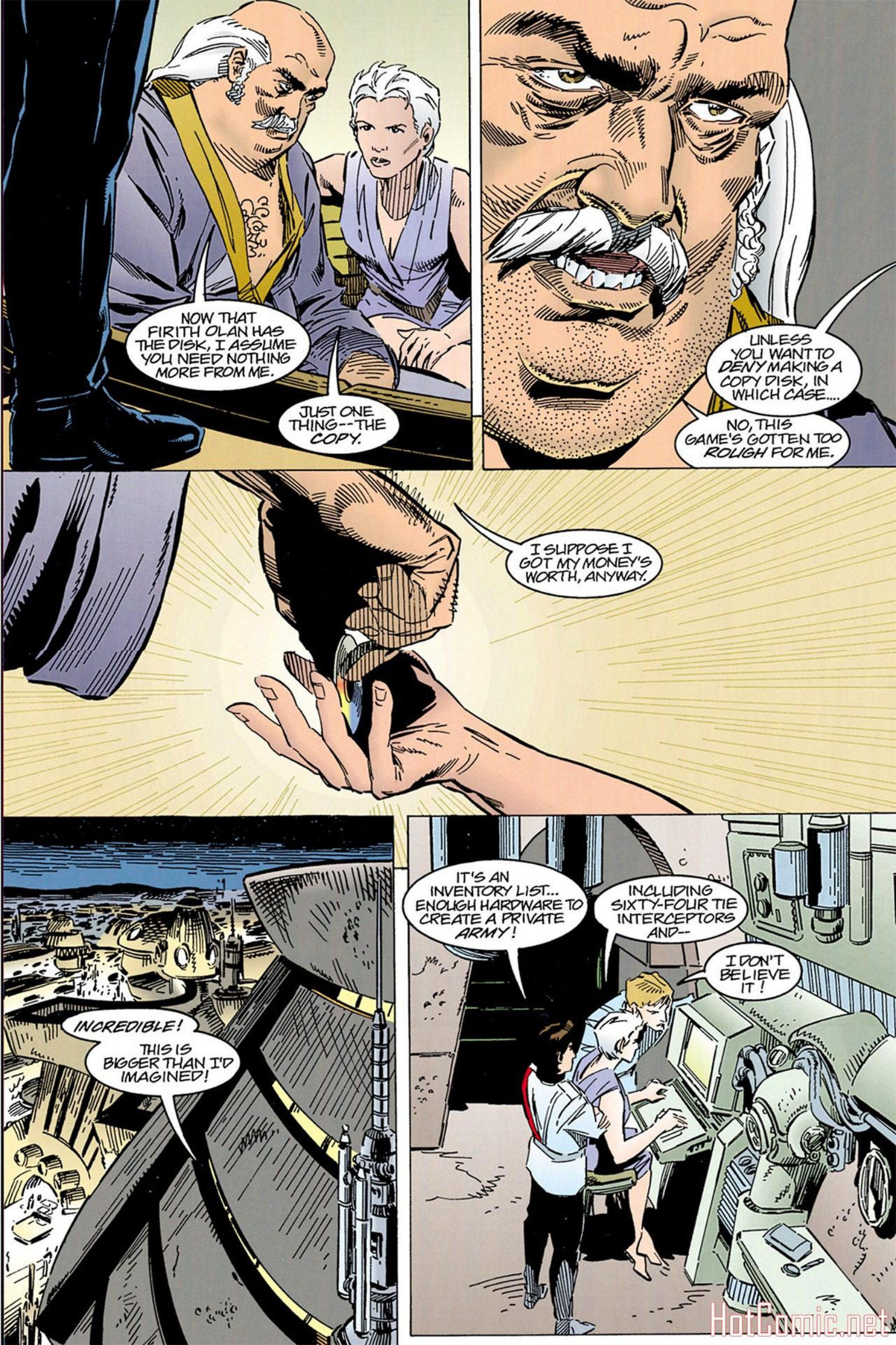

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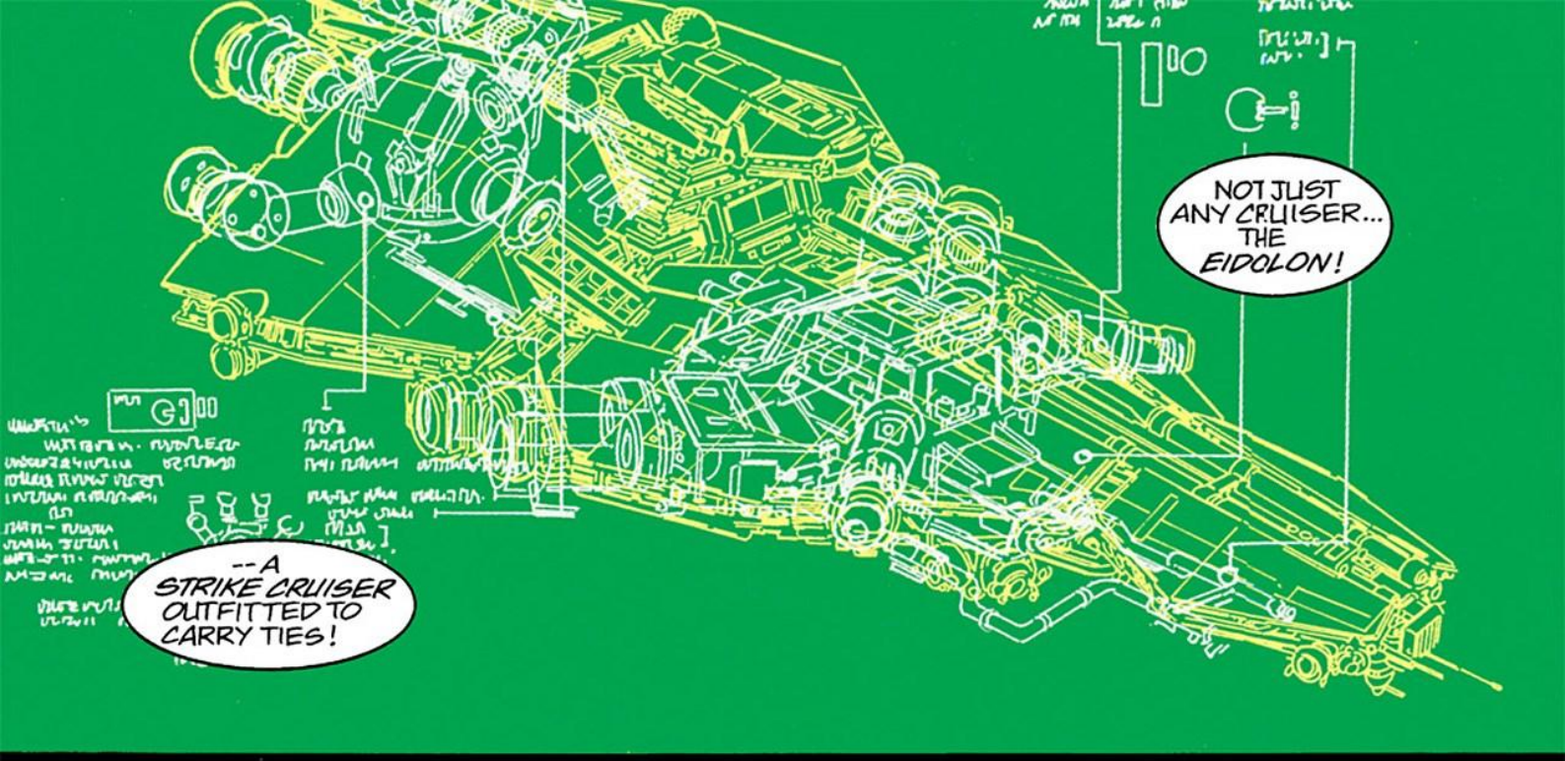

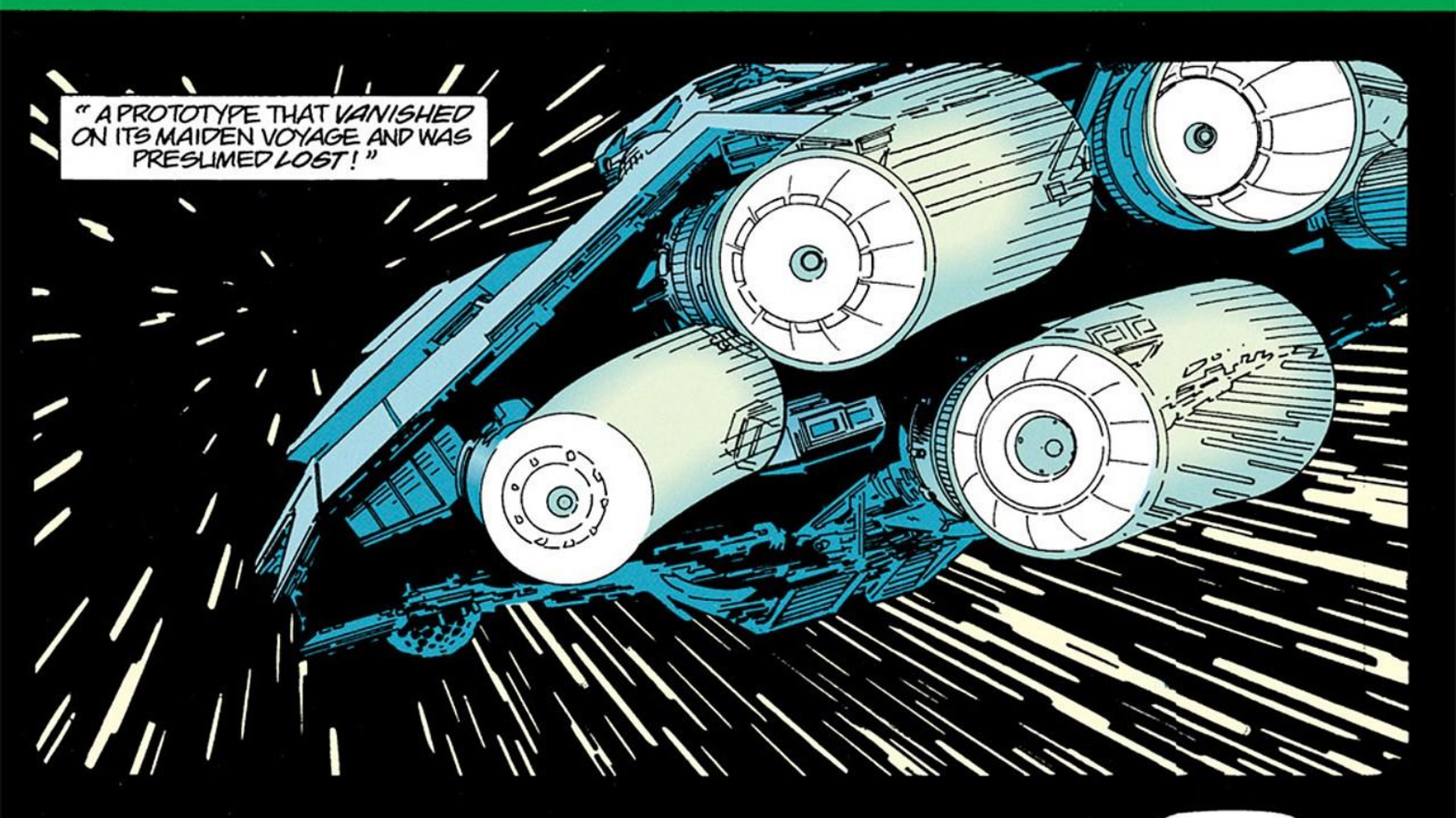

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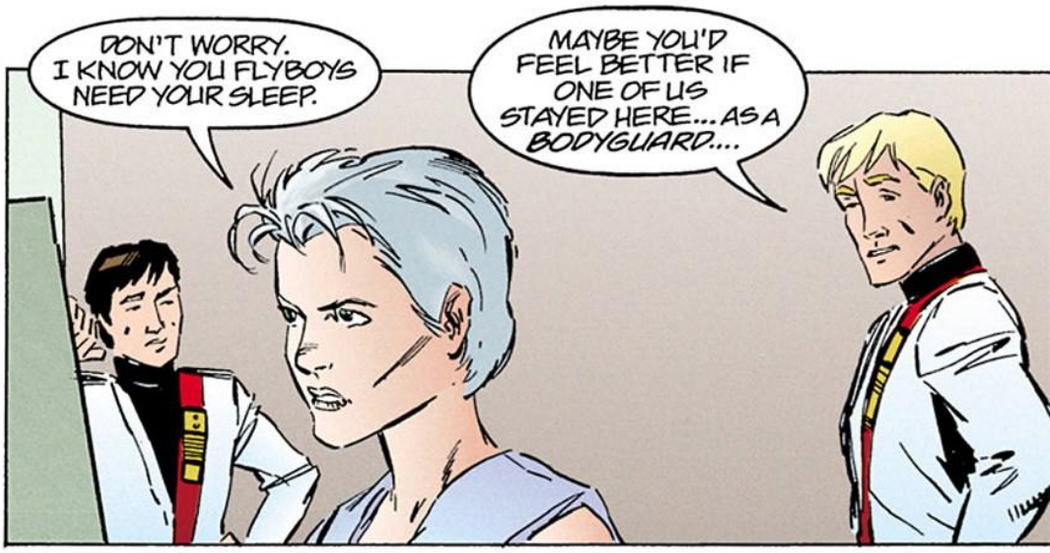

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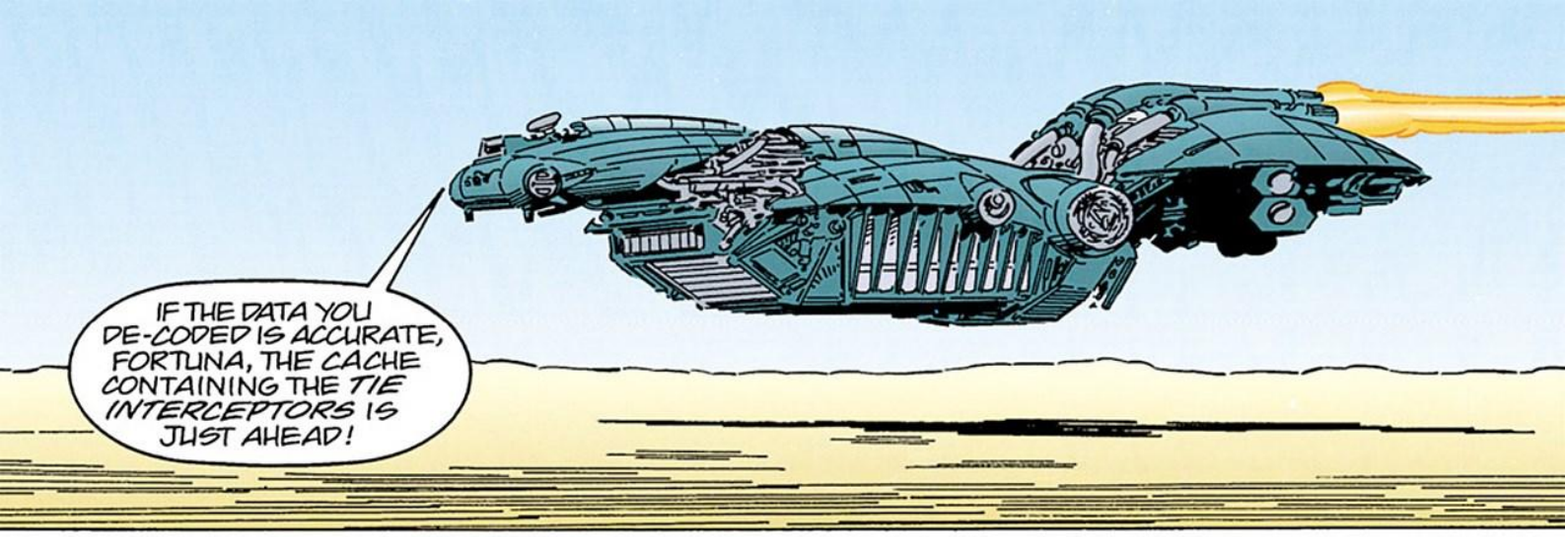

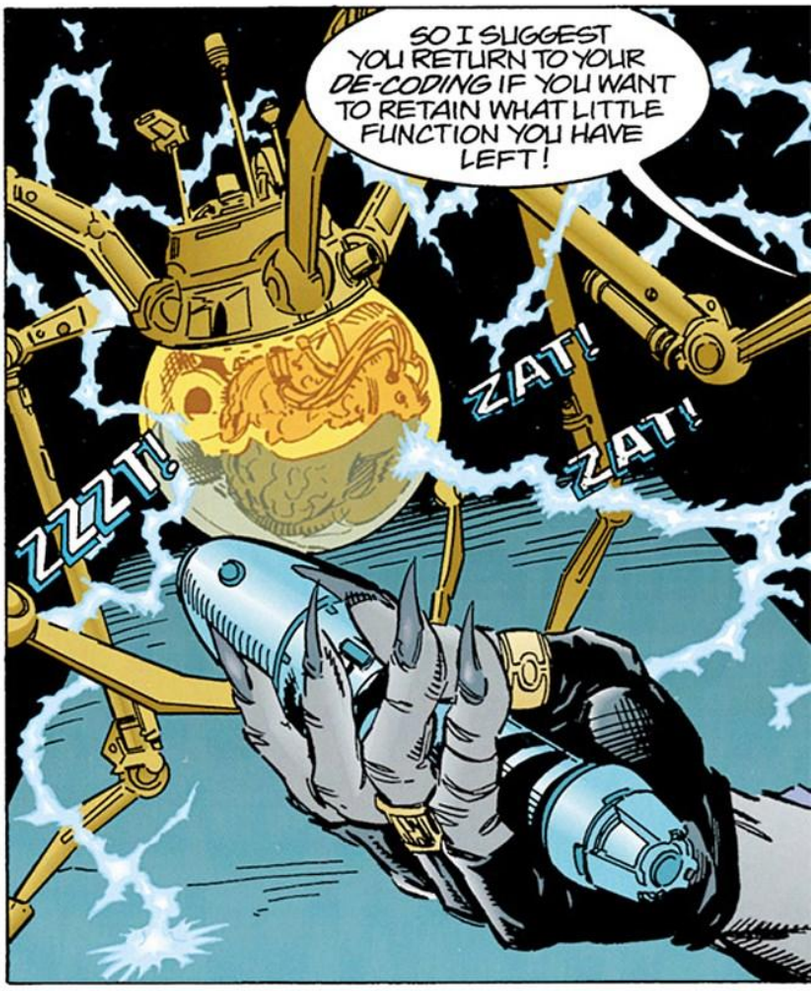

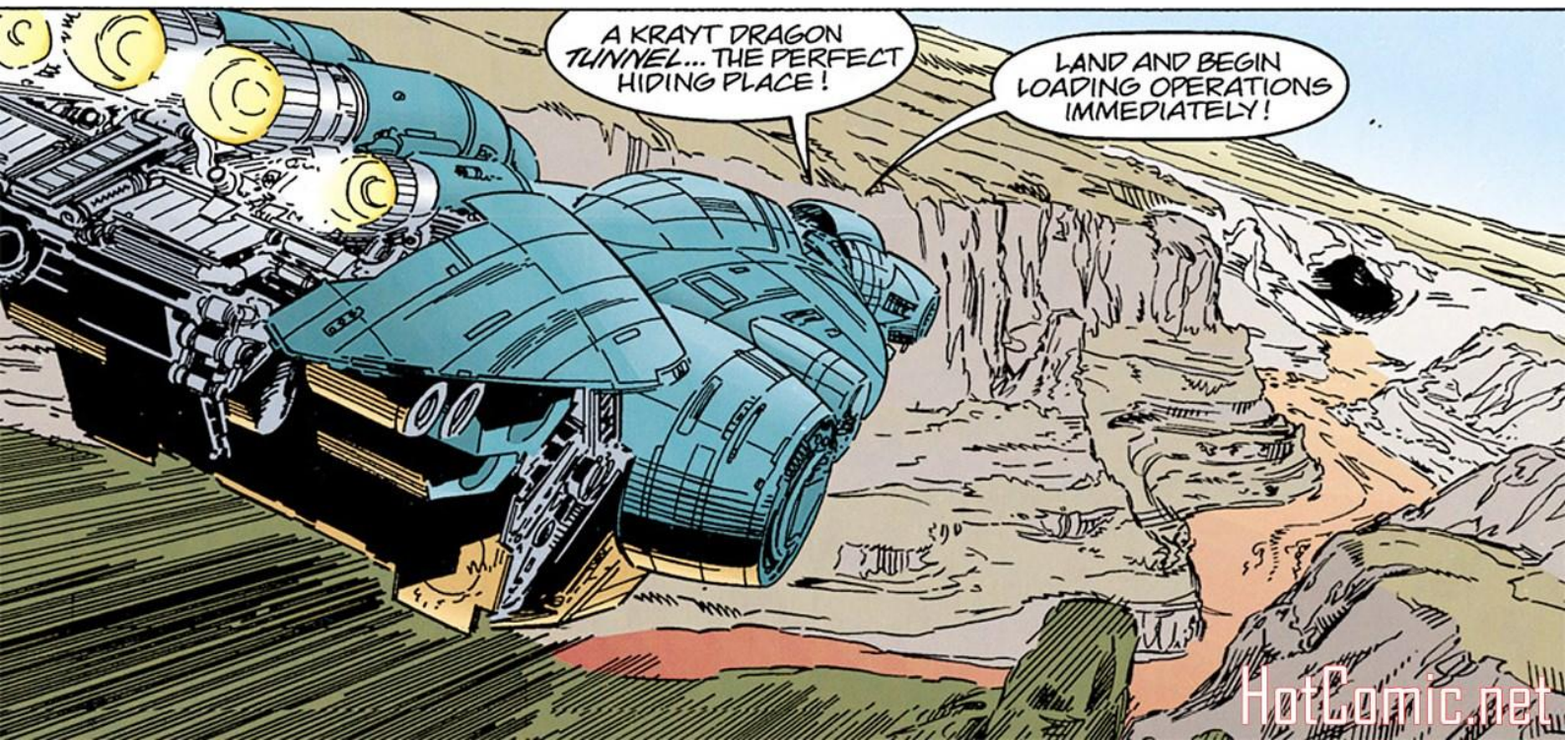

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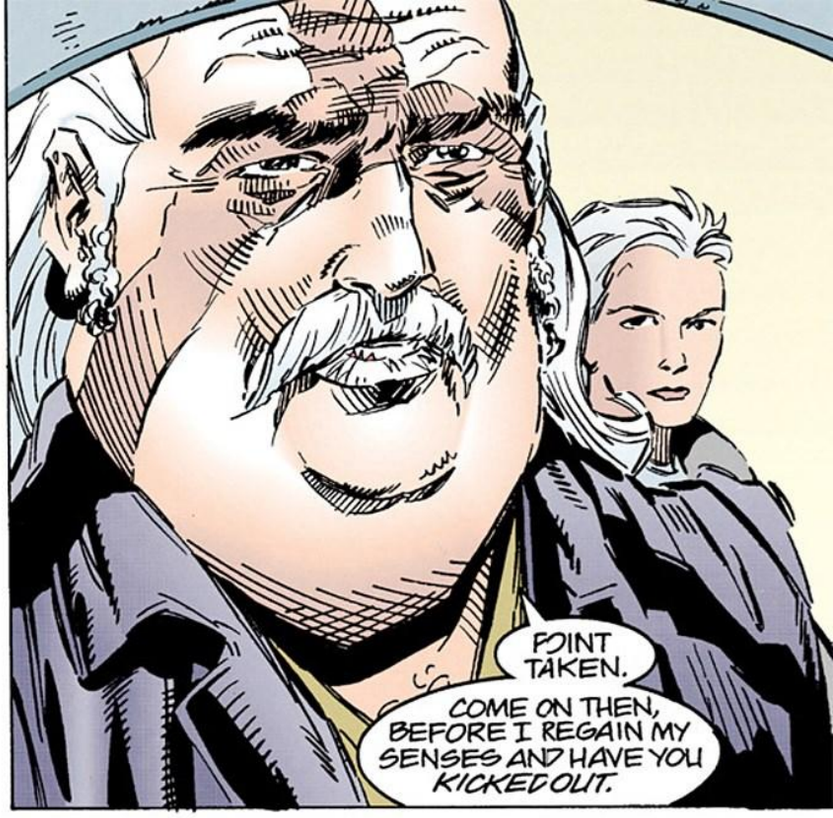

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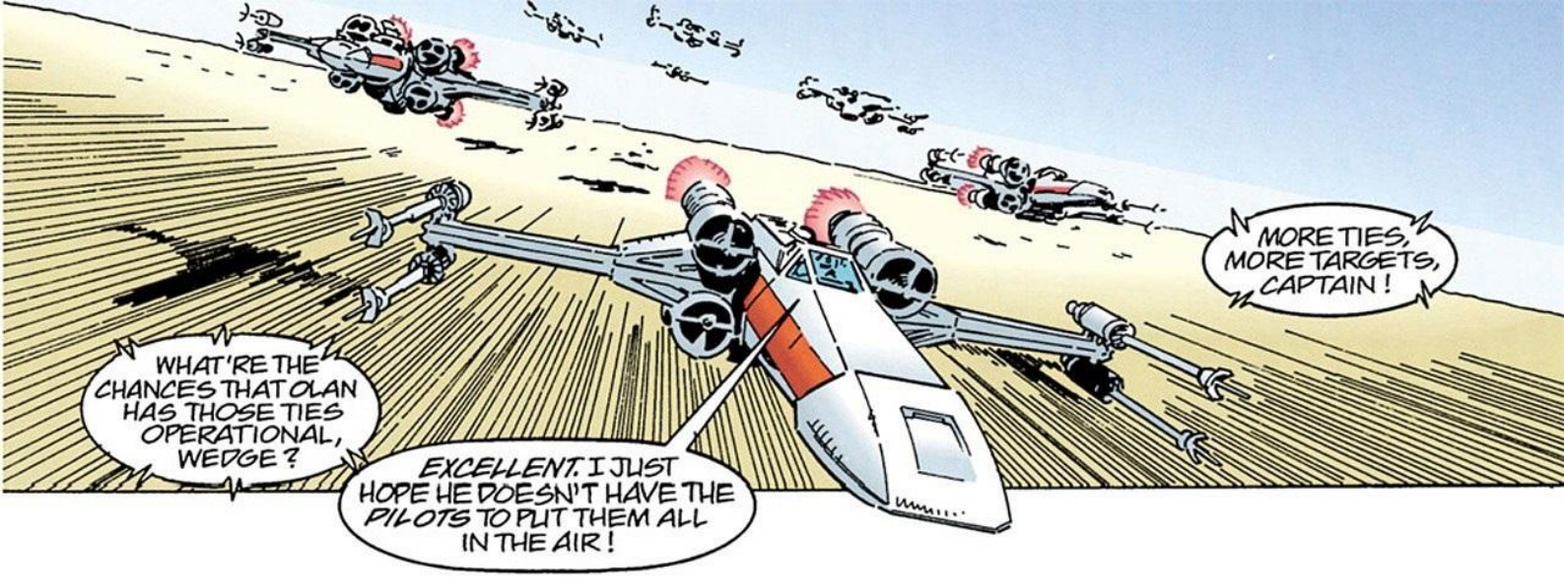
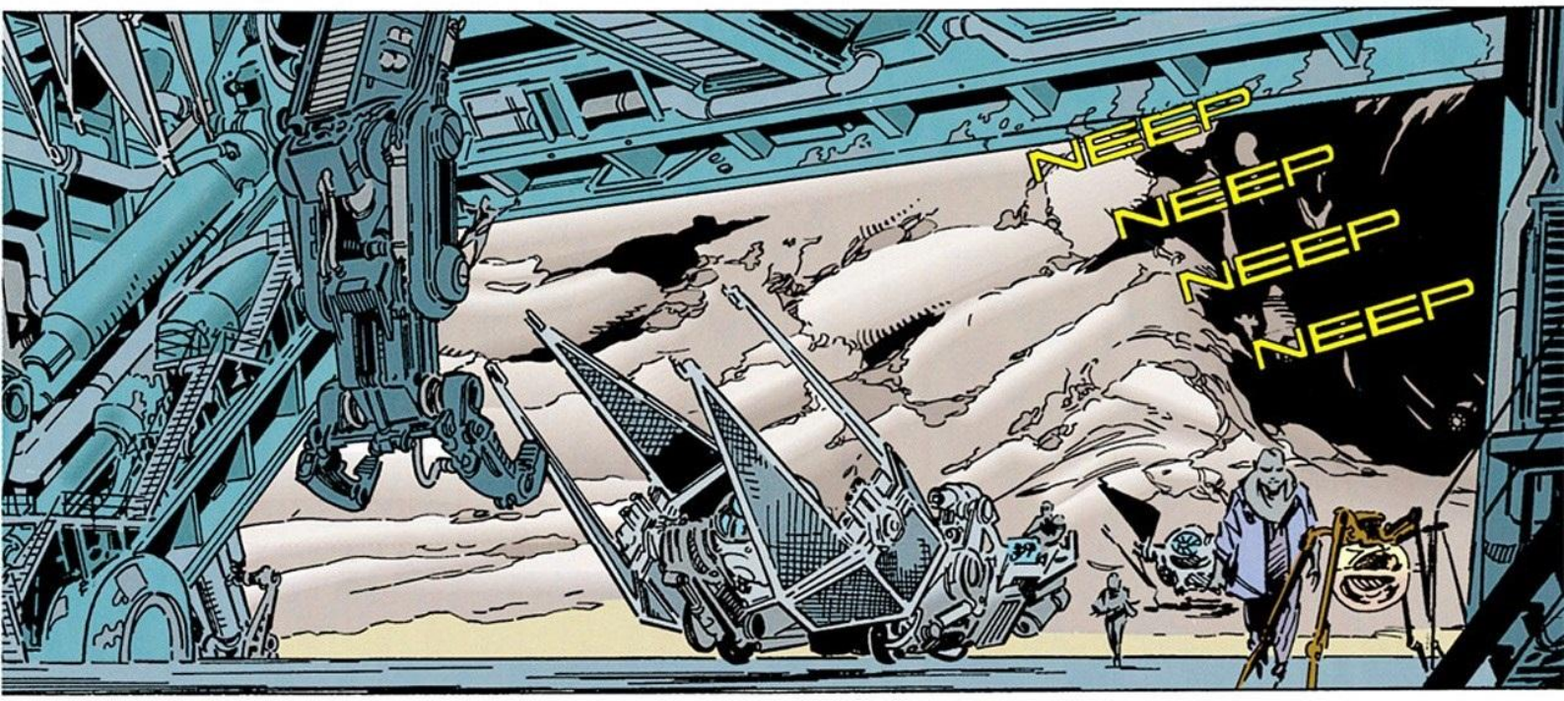
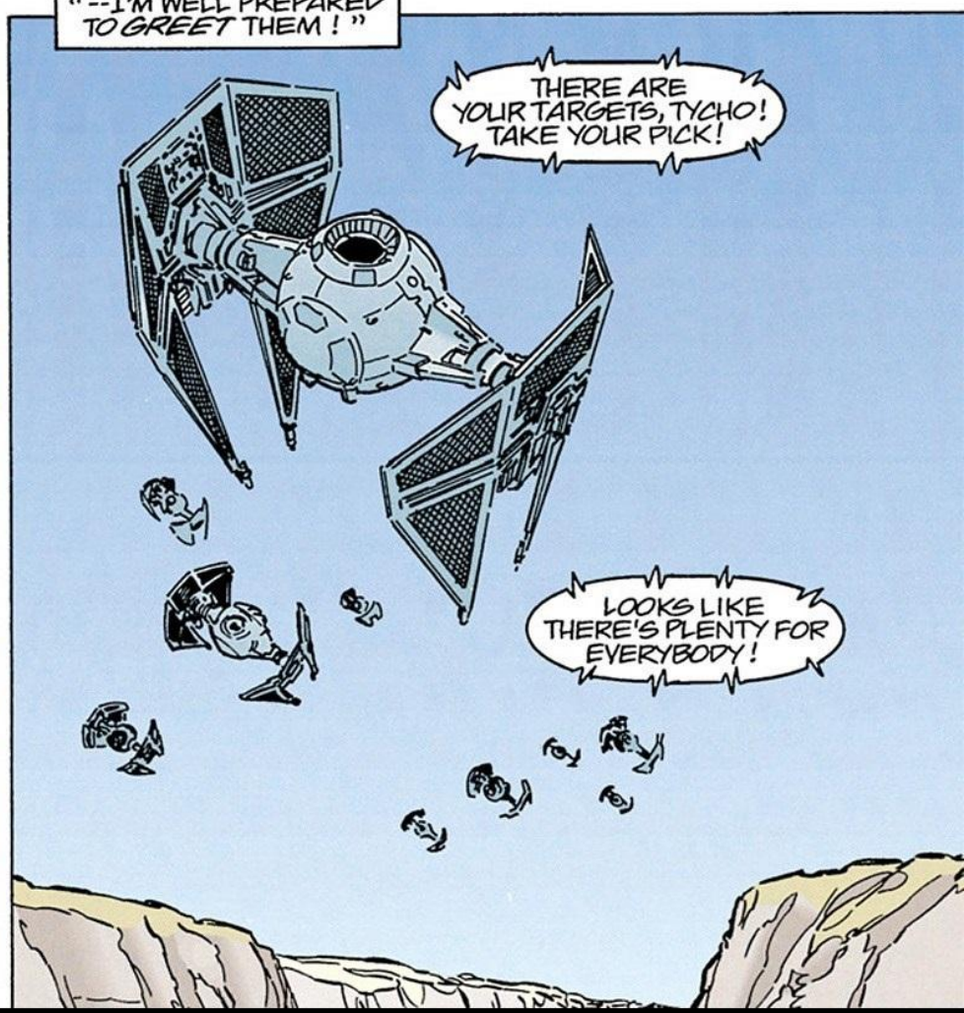
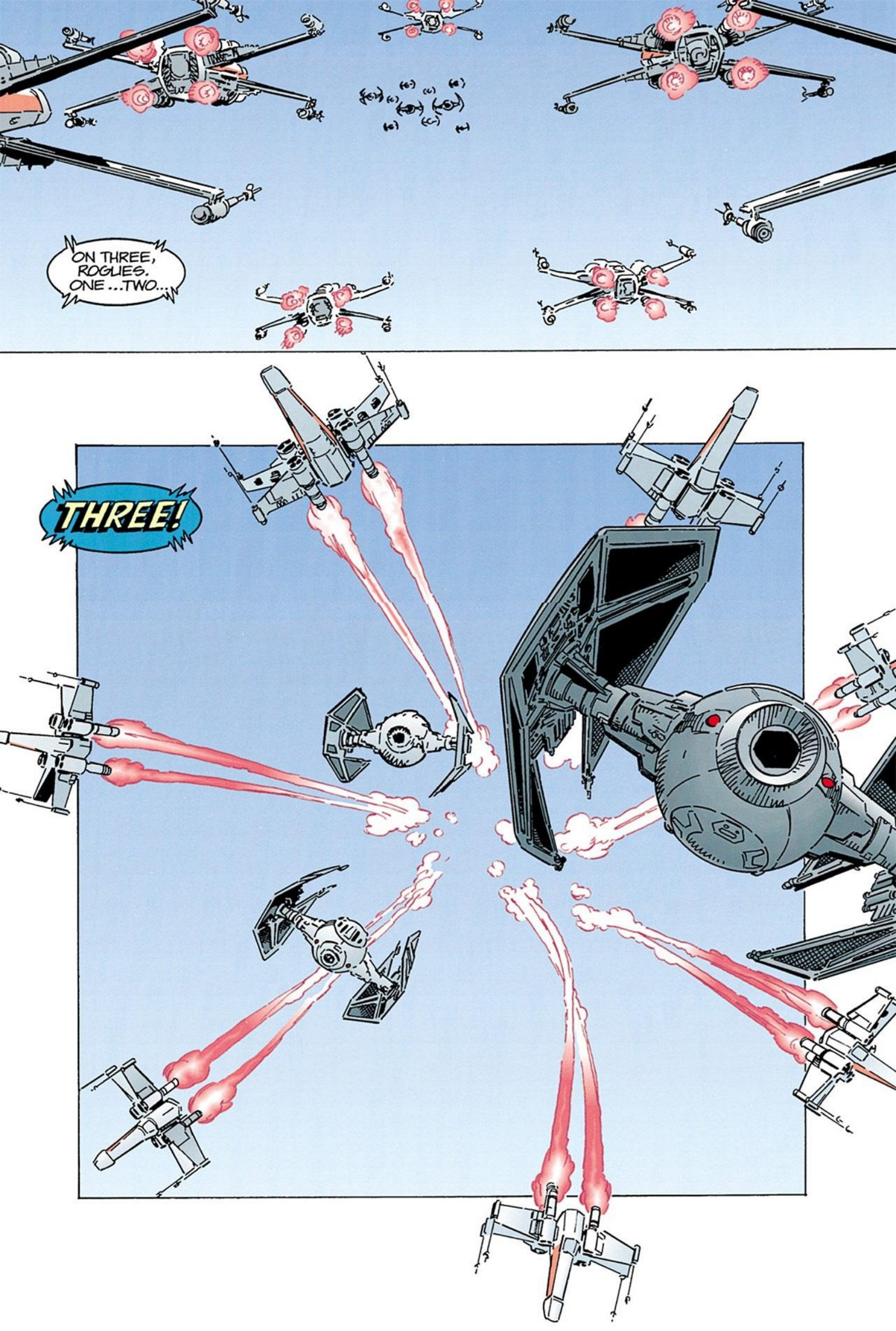
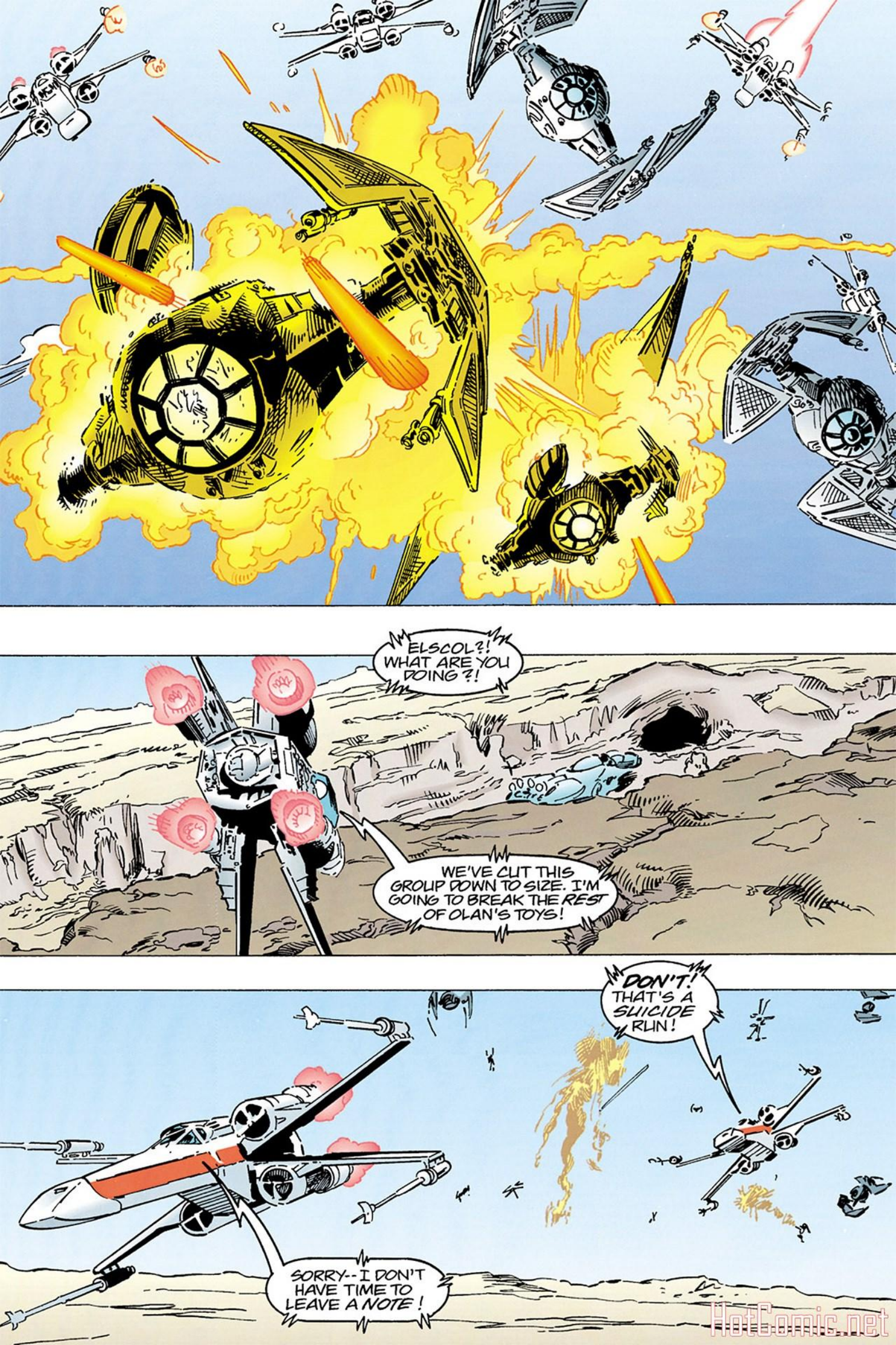

WHAT'RE THE CHANCES THAT OLAN HAS THOSE TIES OPERATIONAL, WEDGE?
EXCELLENT. I JUST HOPE HE DOESN'T HAVE THE PILOTS TO PUT THEM ALL IN THE AIR!
MORE TIES, MORE TARGETS, CAPTAIN!


NEEP
NEEP
NEEP
NEEP

I KNEW ROGUE SQUADRON WOULD FIND US! LUCKILY--
NEEP
NEEP
NEEP


"--I'M WELL PREPARED TO GREET THEM!"
THERE ARE YOUR TARGETS, TYCHO! TAKE YOUR PICK!
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S PLENTY FOR EVERYBODY!


ON THREE, ROGUES. ONE ...TWO...
THREE!



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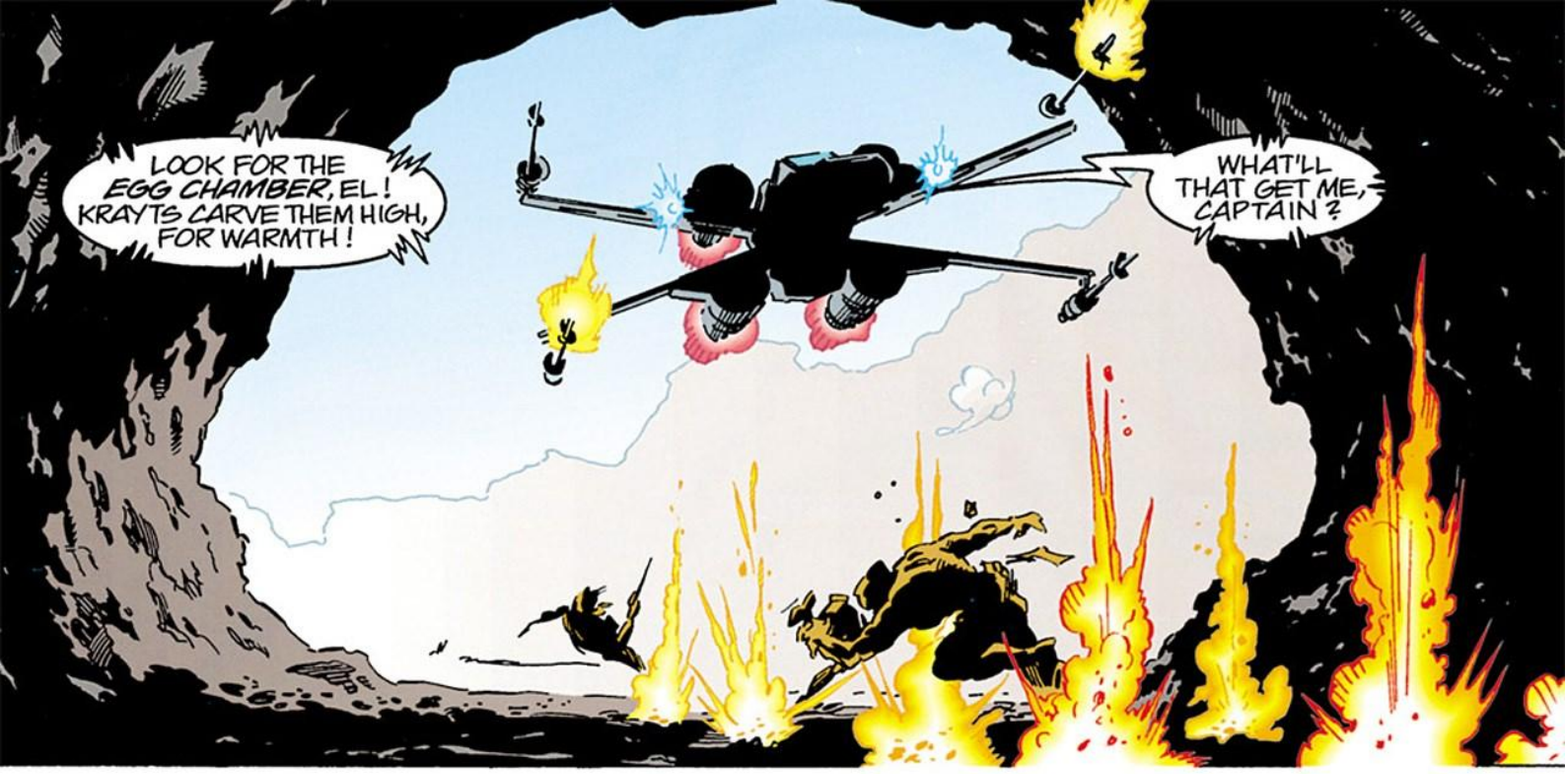

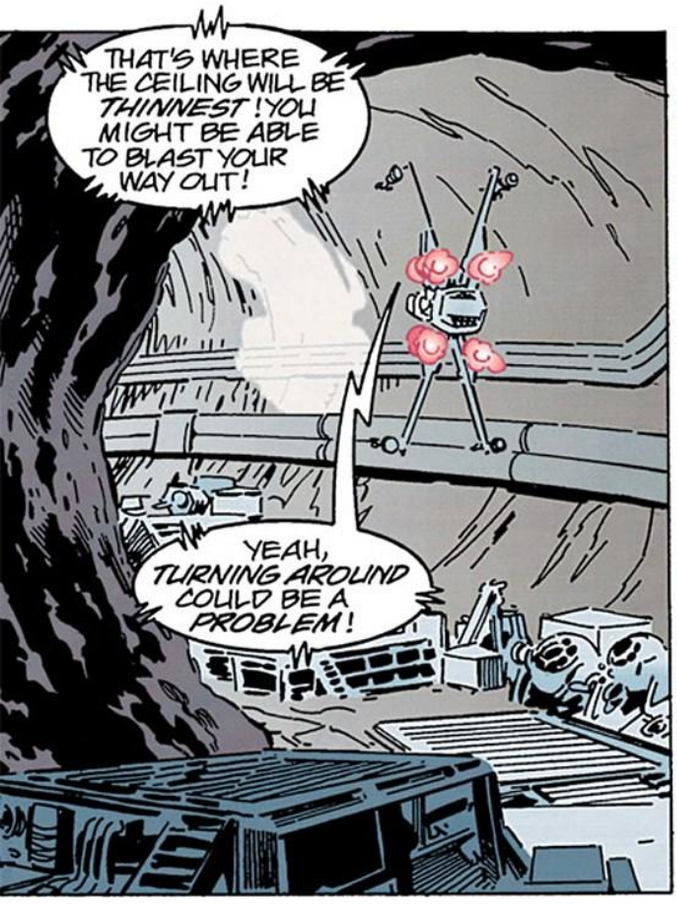

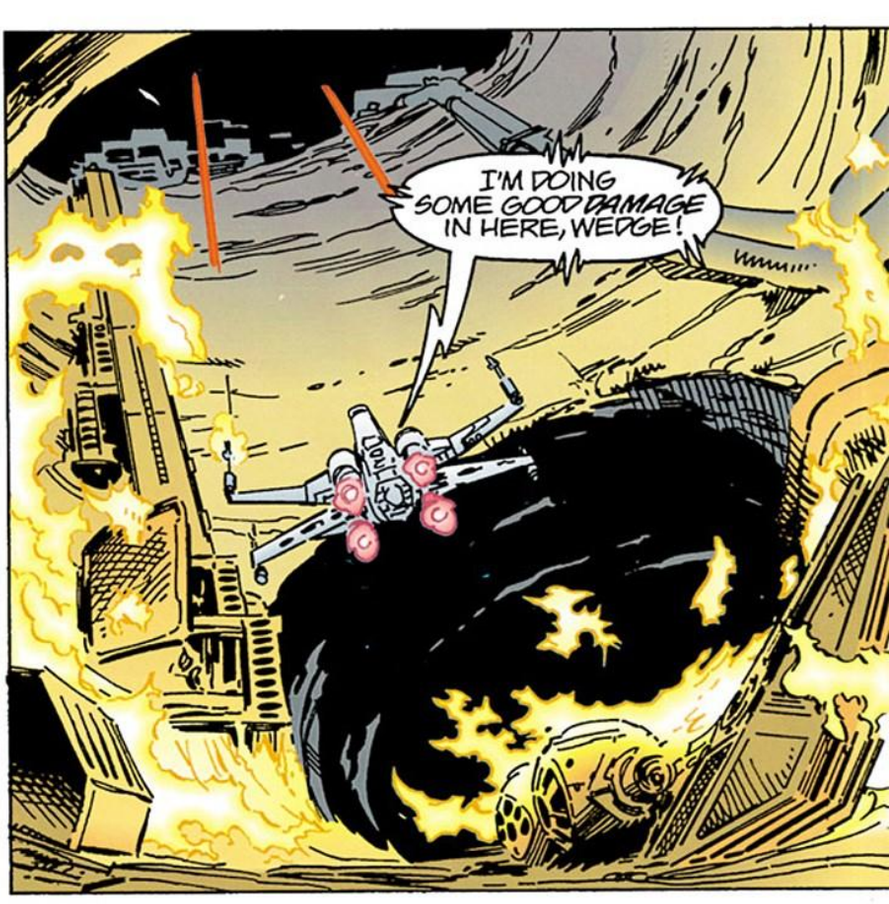

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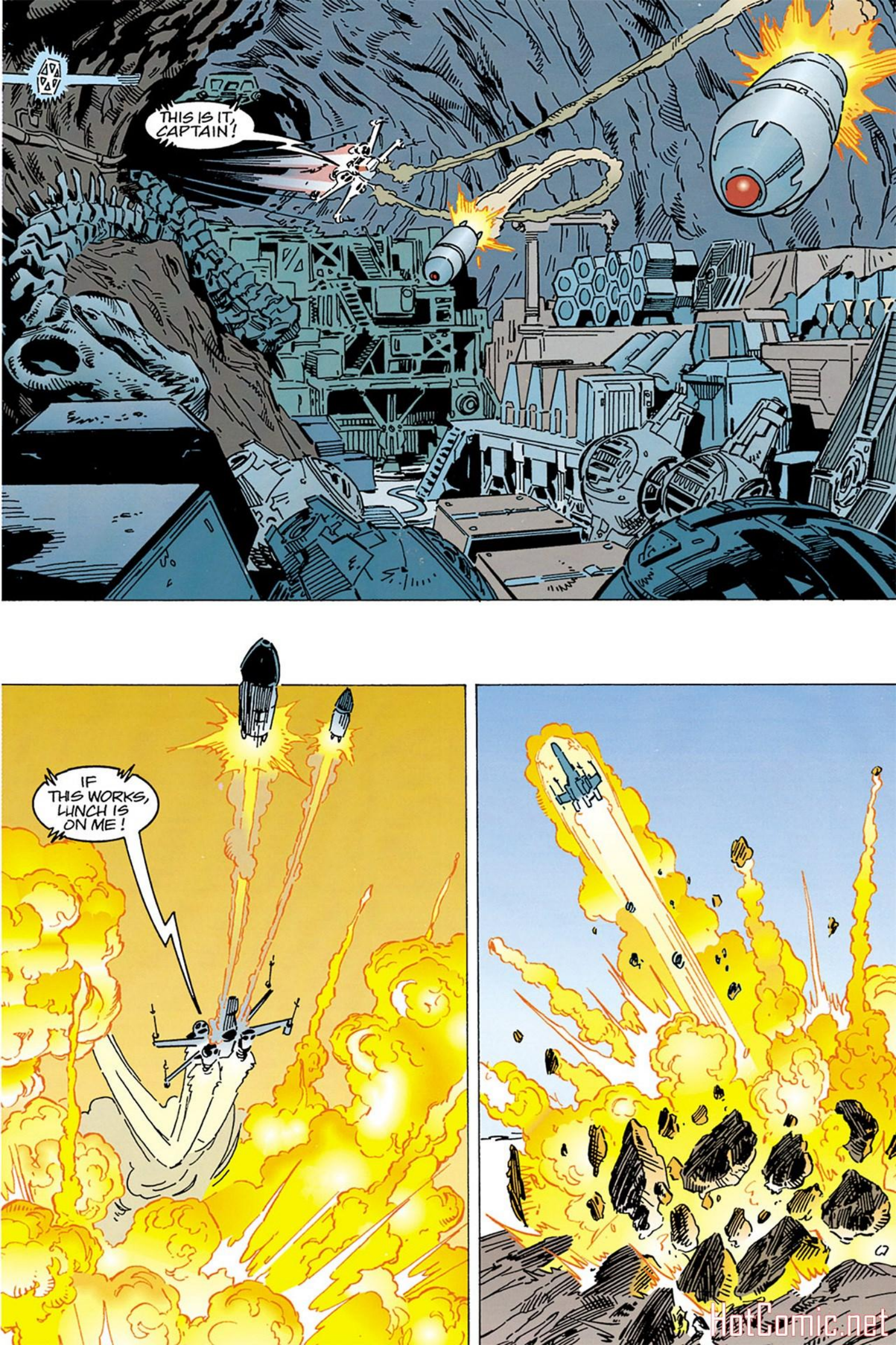

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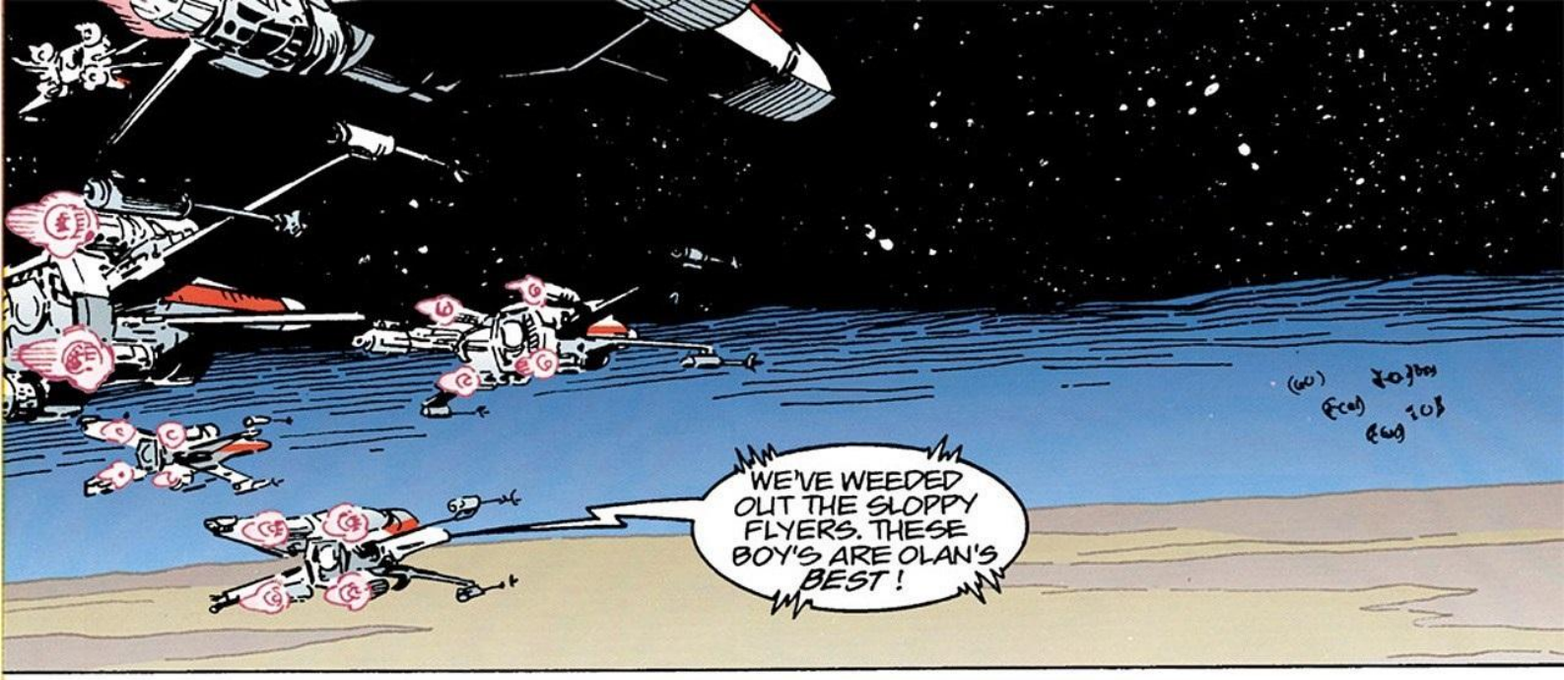
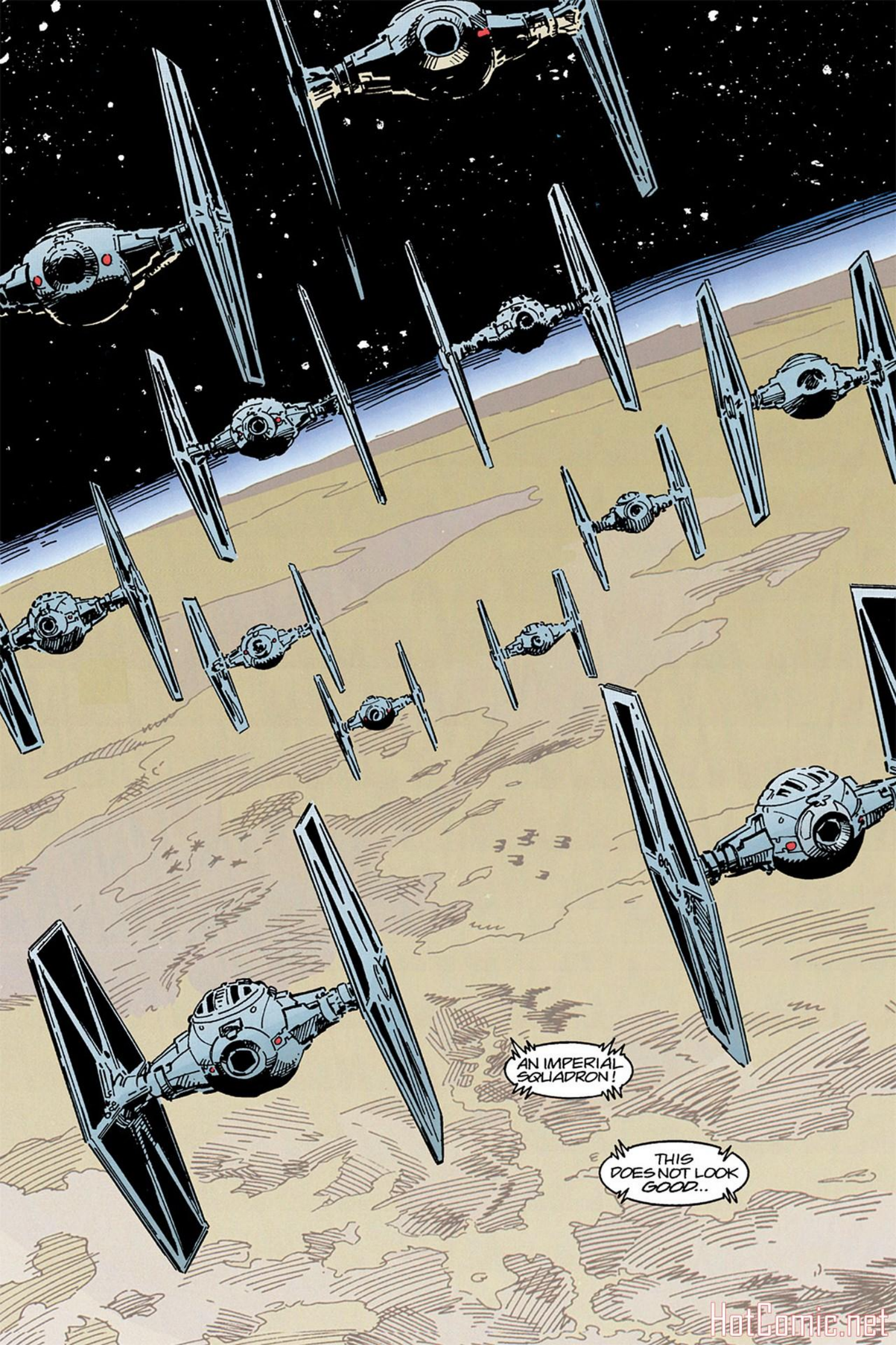

WE'VE WEEDED OUT THE SLOPPY FLYERS. THESE BOY'S ARE OLAN'S BEST!

UH-OH! CAPTAIN, ARE YOU PICKING UP WHAT I'M PICKING UP?
FRAID SO.

HEADS UP, EVERYBODY! WE'RE GETTING COMPANY FROM ABOVE!



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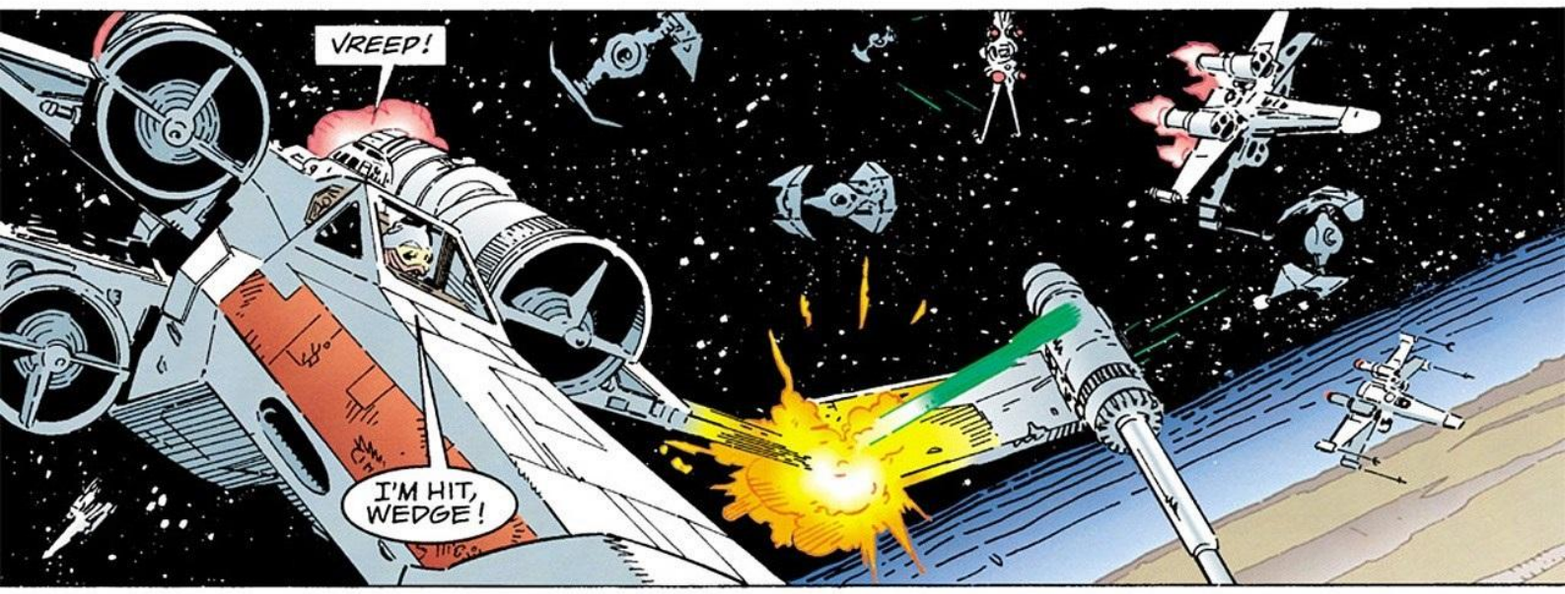
WE HAVE TIME FOR *ONE PASS* AT OLAN'S TIES BEFORE THE IMPS LOCK ONTO US!
MAKE IT *COUNT*, ROGUES!


VREEP!
I'M HIT, WEDGE!

YOU OKAY, DLLR?
I'M STILL OPERATIONAL, BUT DON'T EXPECT ANY *FANCY* STUFF!

TIES ARE IN RANGE! *HEADS UP*!

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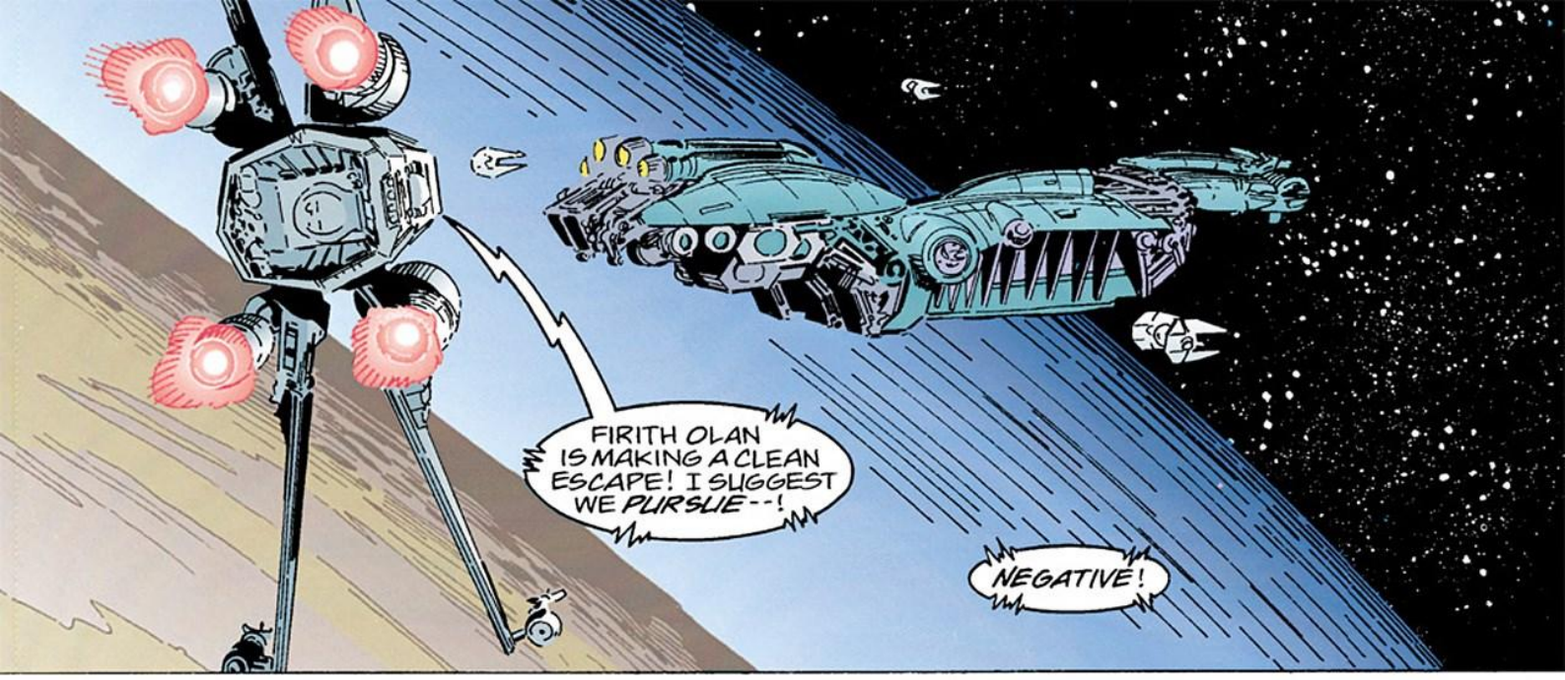

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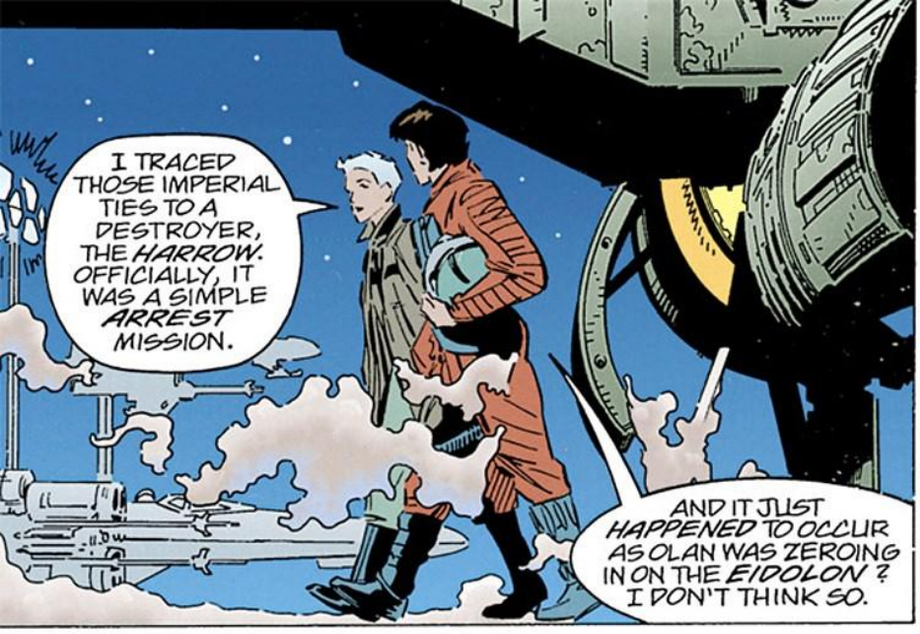

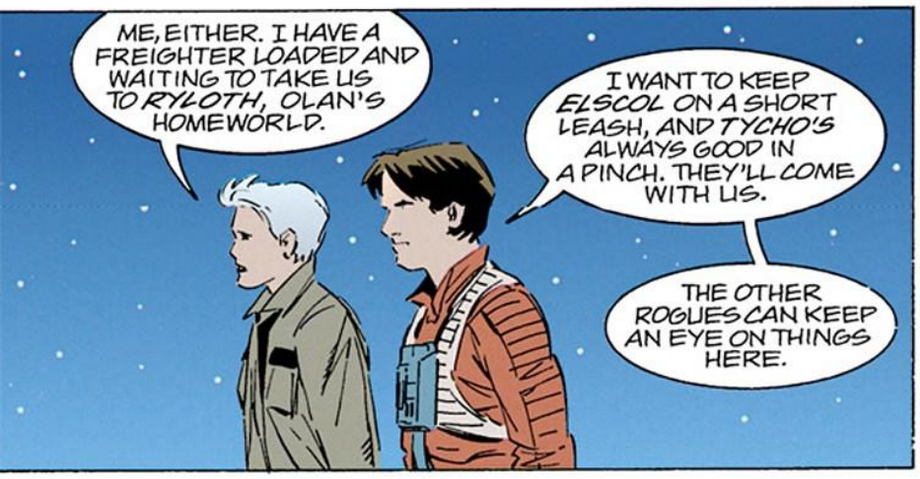

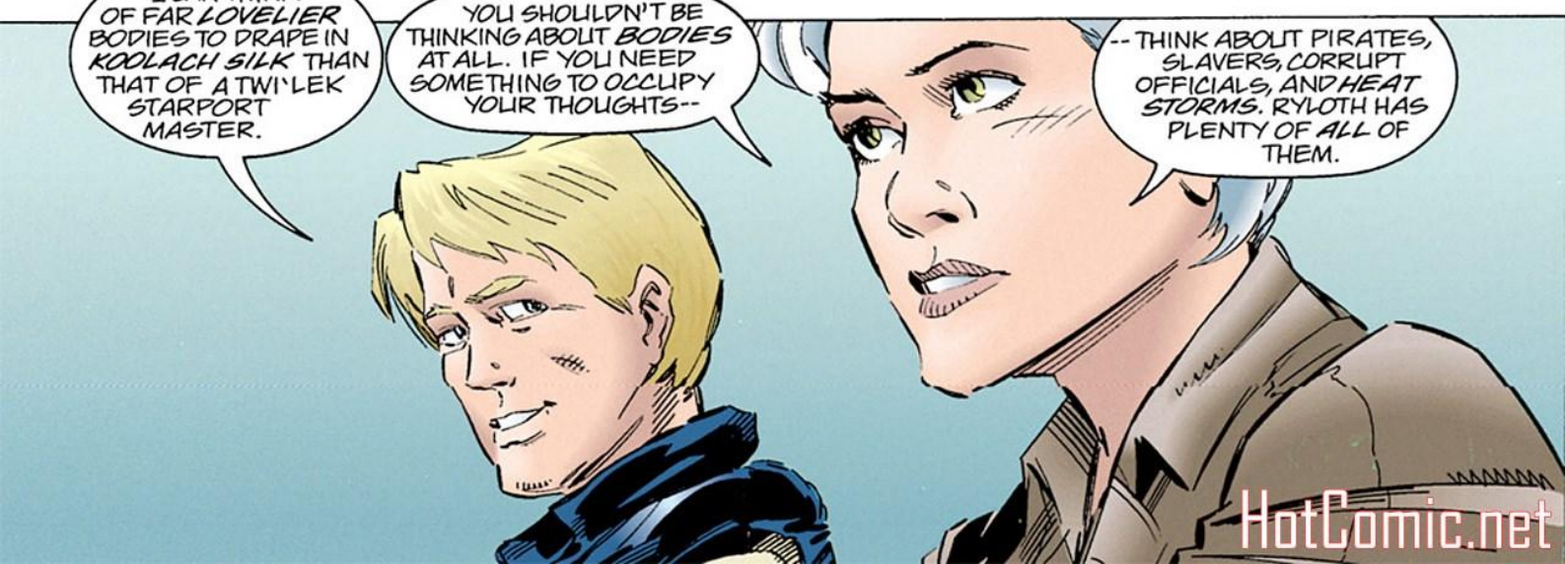

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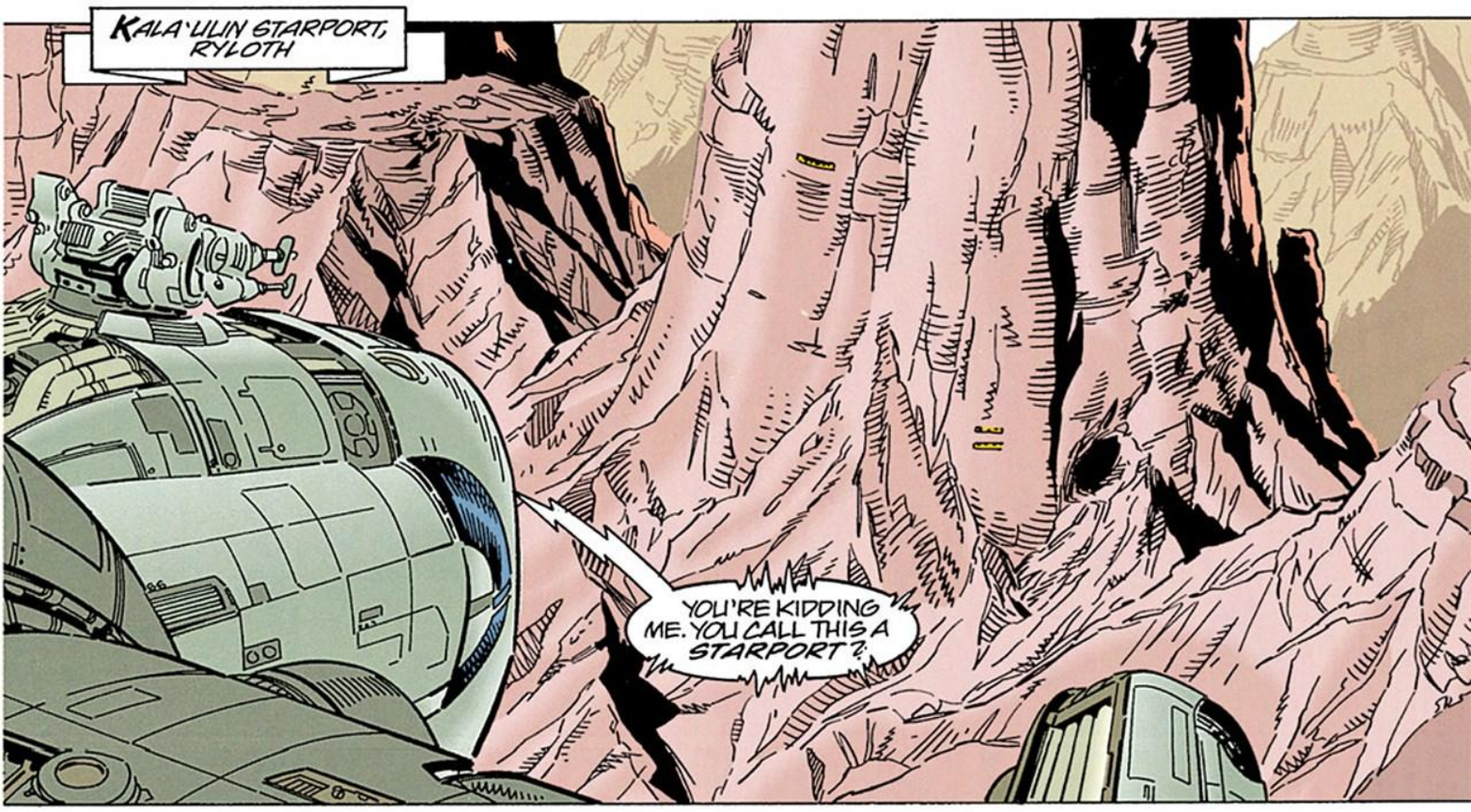

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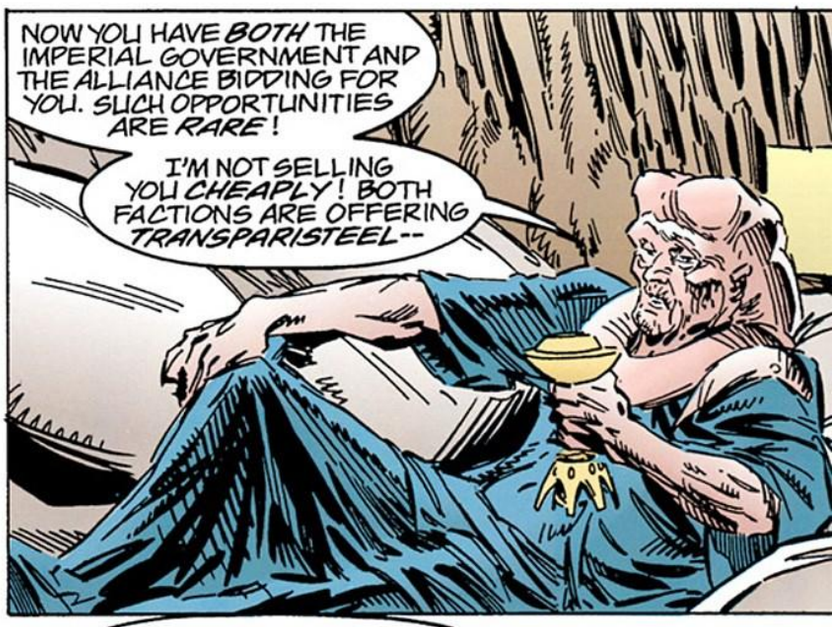

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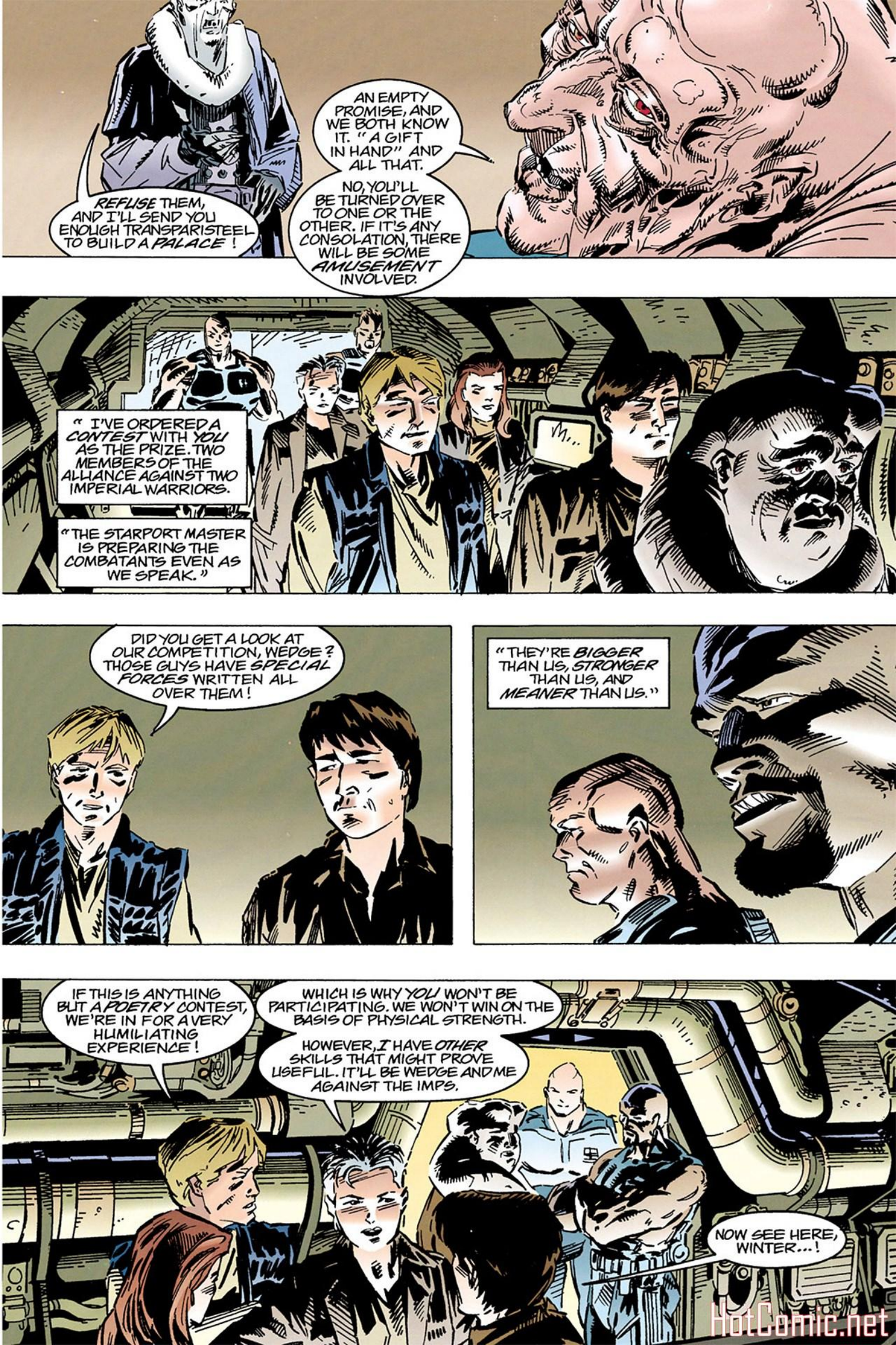

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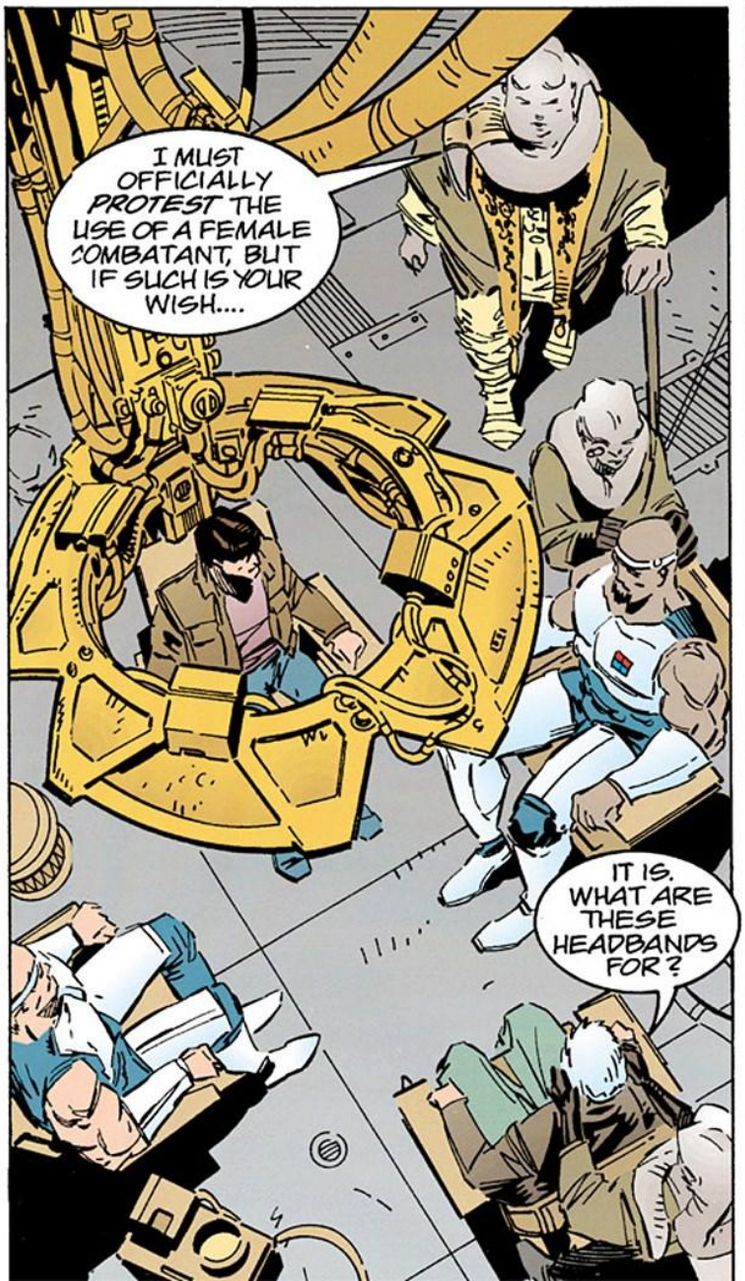

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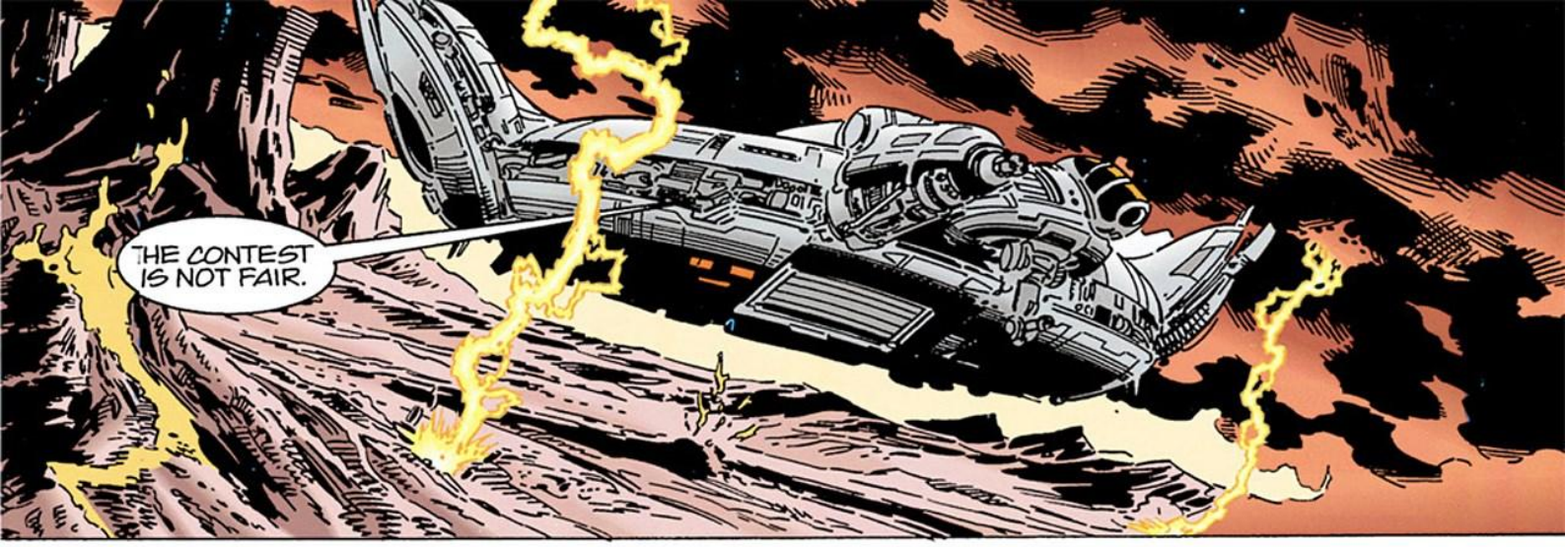

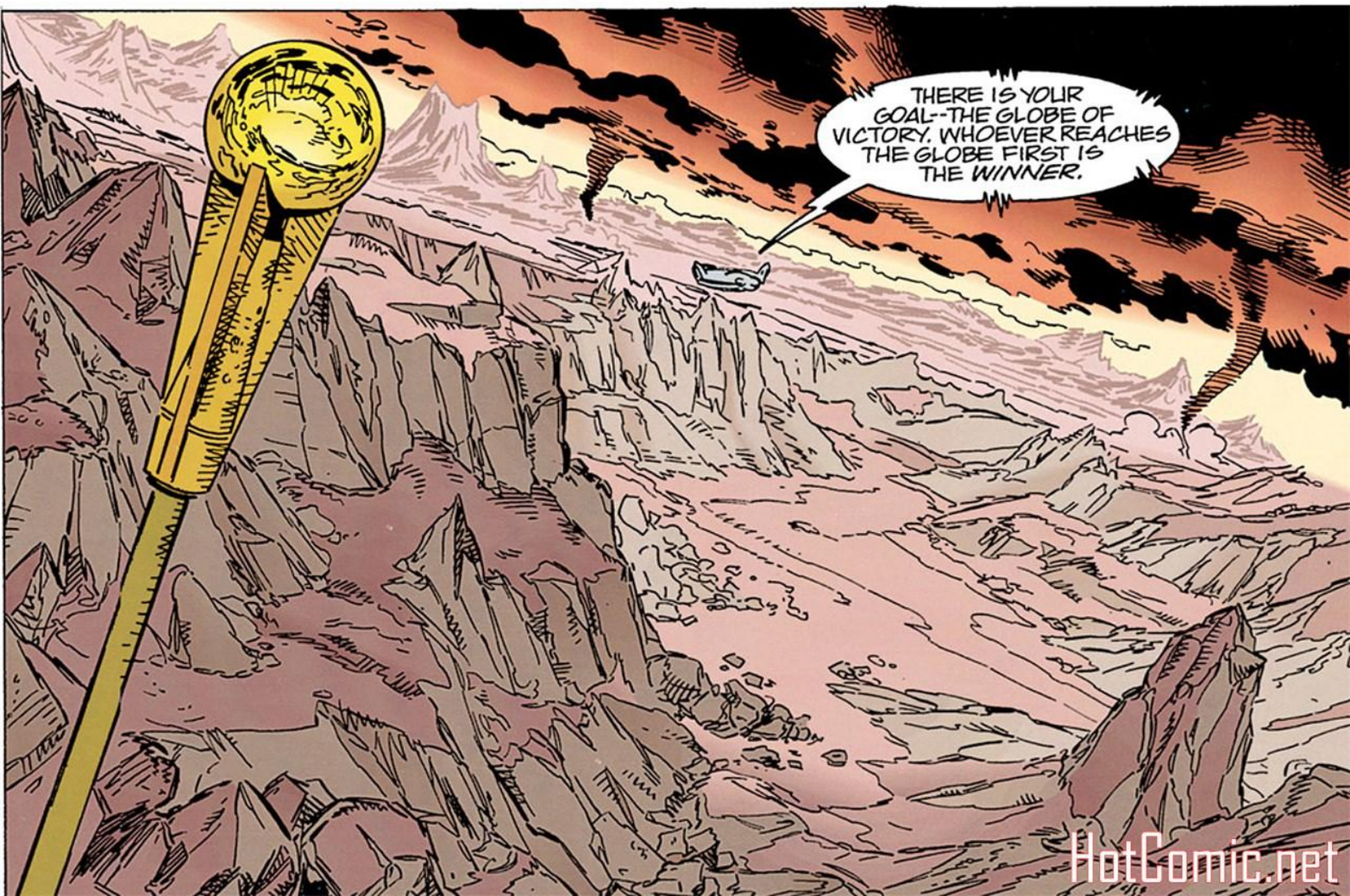

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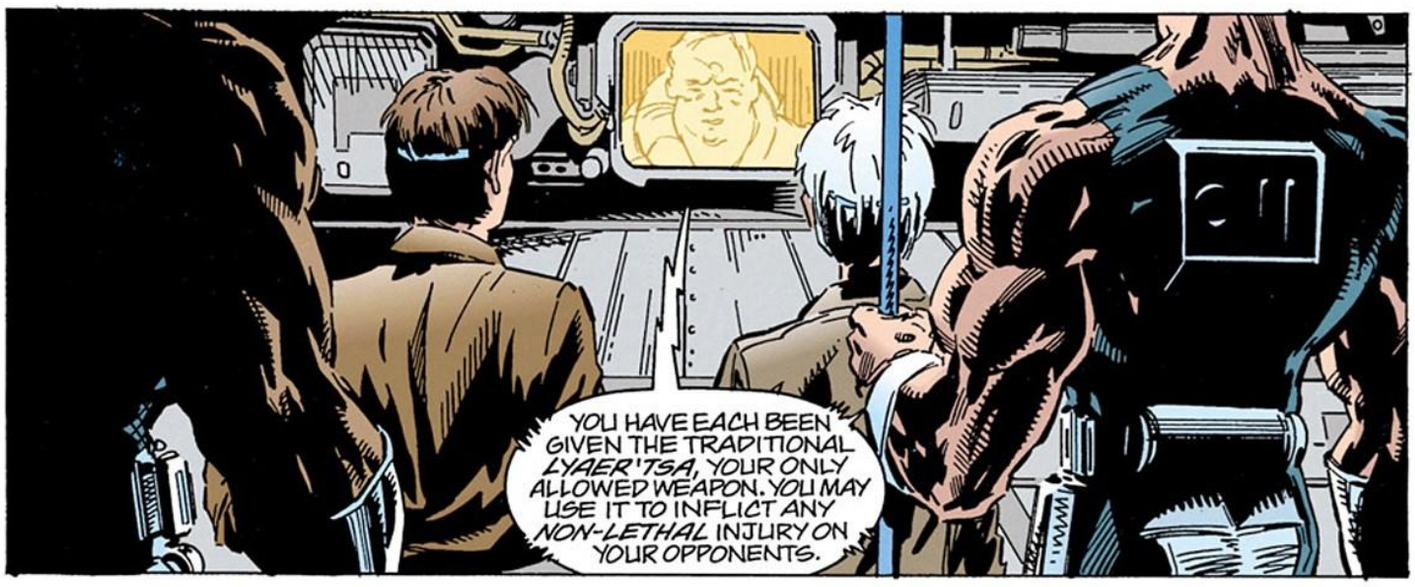

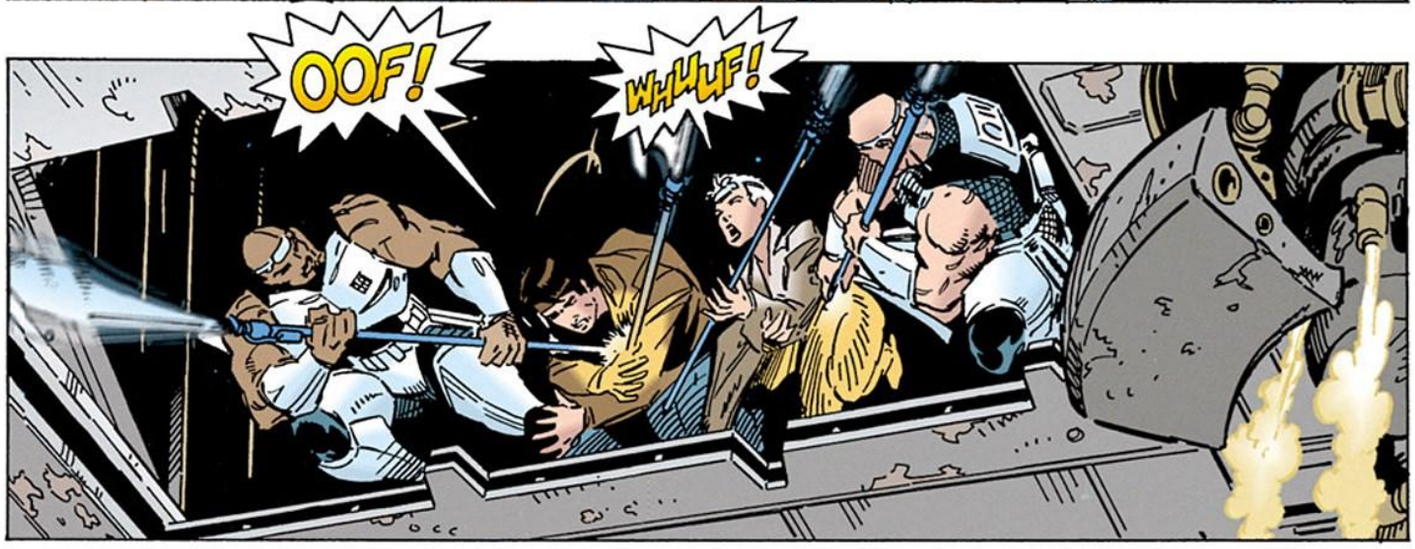

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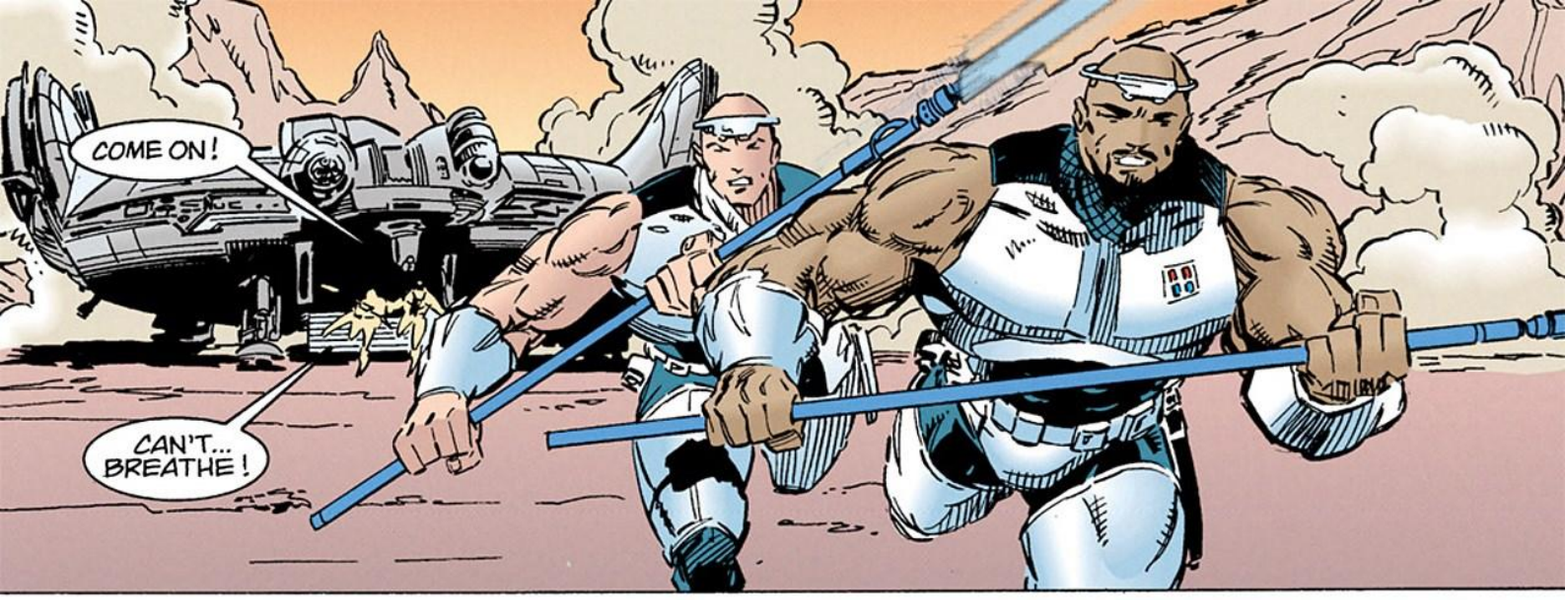

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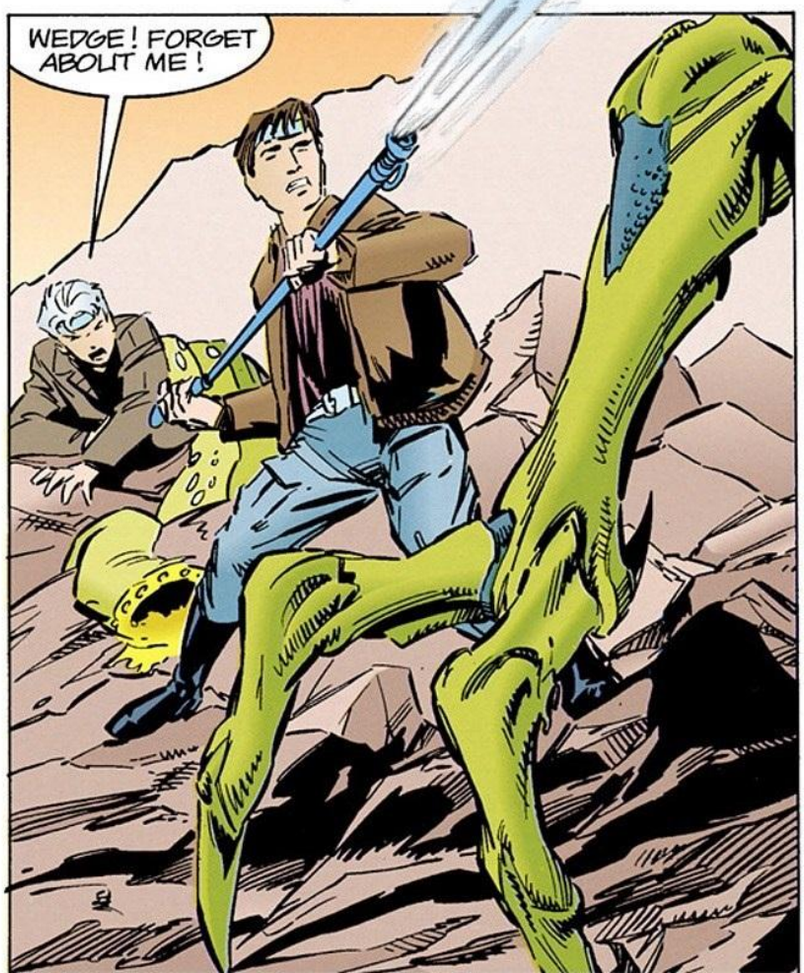
NOW'S OUR CHANCE! HURRY!

UUUH!

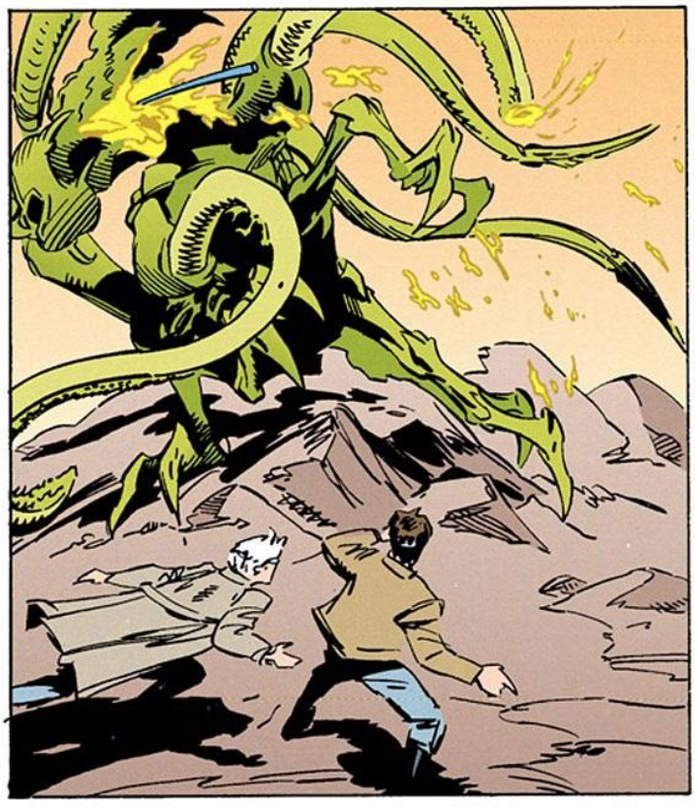

WEDGE! FORGET ABOUT ME!

"THE IMP TROOPER'S ABOUT TO GRAB THE PRIZE! YOU CAN STILL BEAT HIM TO IT!"

THERE'S NO WAY I'M LEAVING IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS FIGHT!
I'M ORDERING YOU OUT, WEDGE!

SORRY, WINTER, BUT I DIDN'T HEAR THAT ORDER! I'M IN ON THIS ONE TO THE END!

CHUKK!

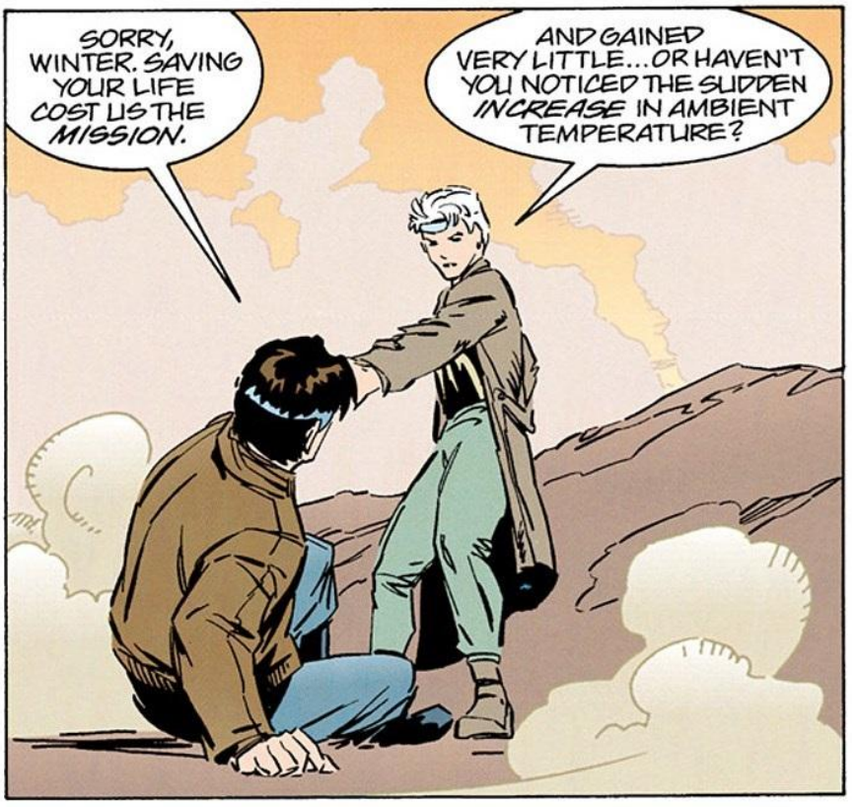


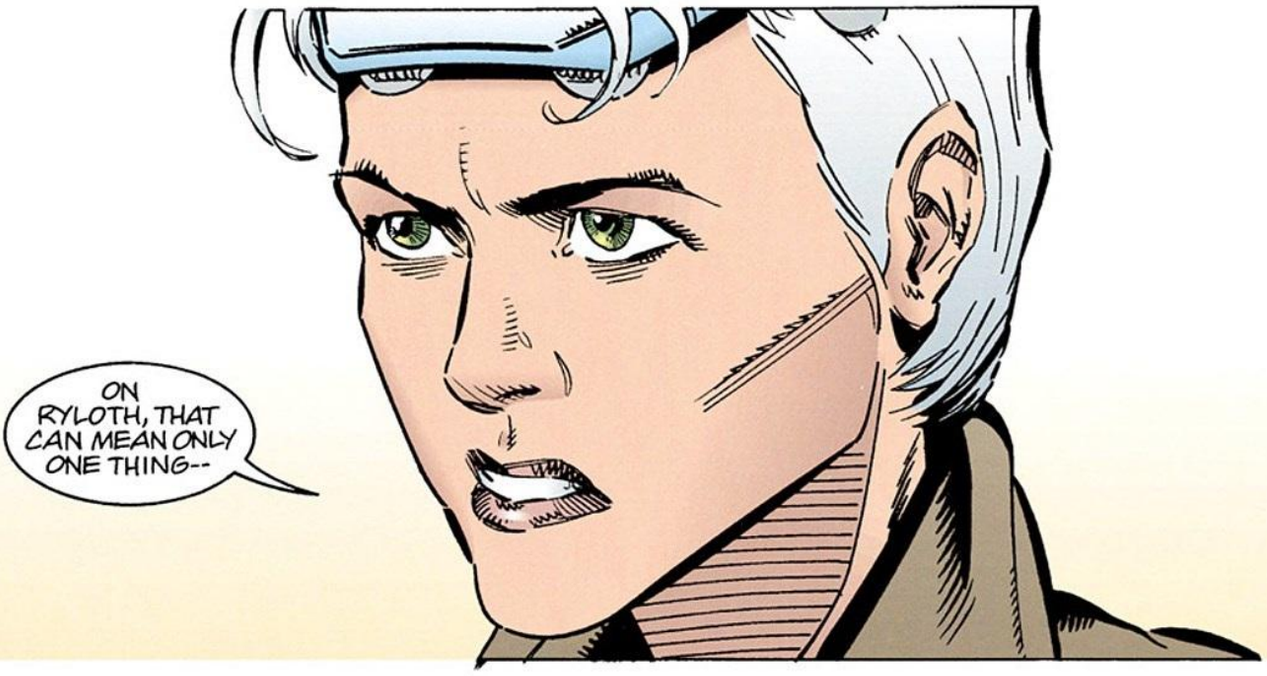
FWUMP

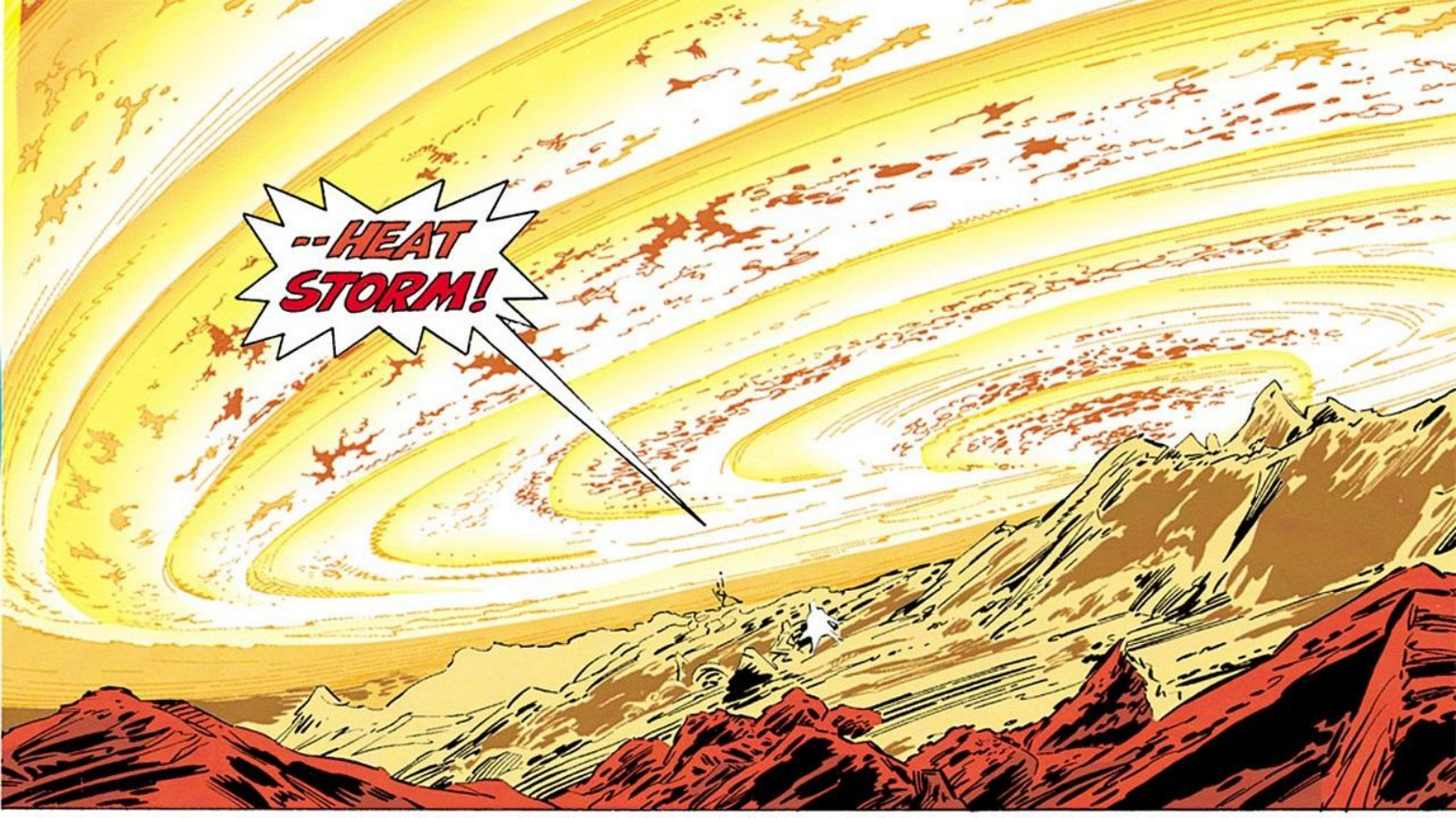
KA-CHUNCH!

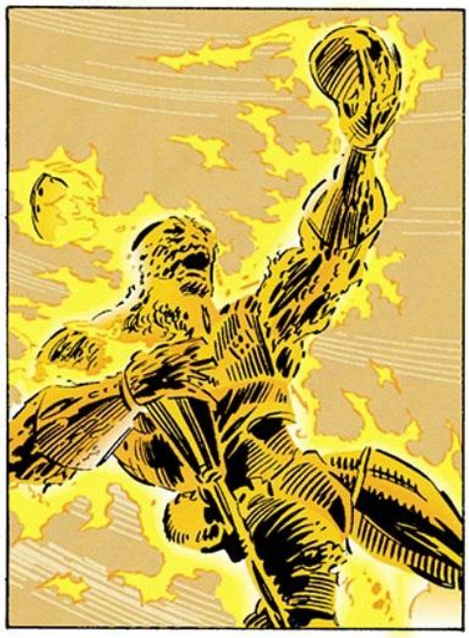
WELL, YOU BLEW IT.

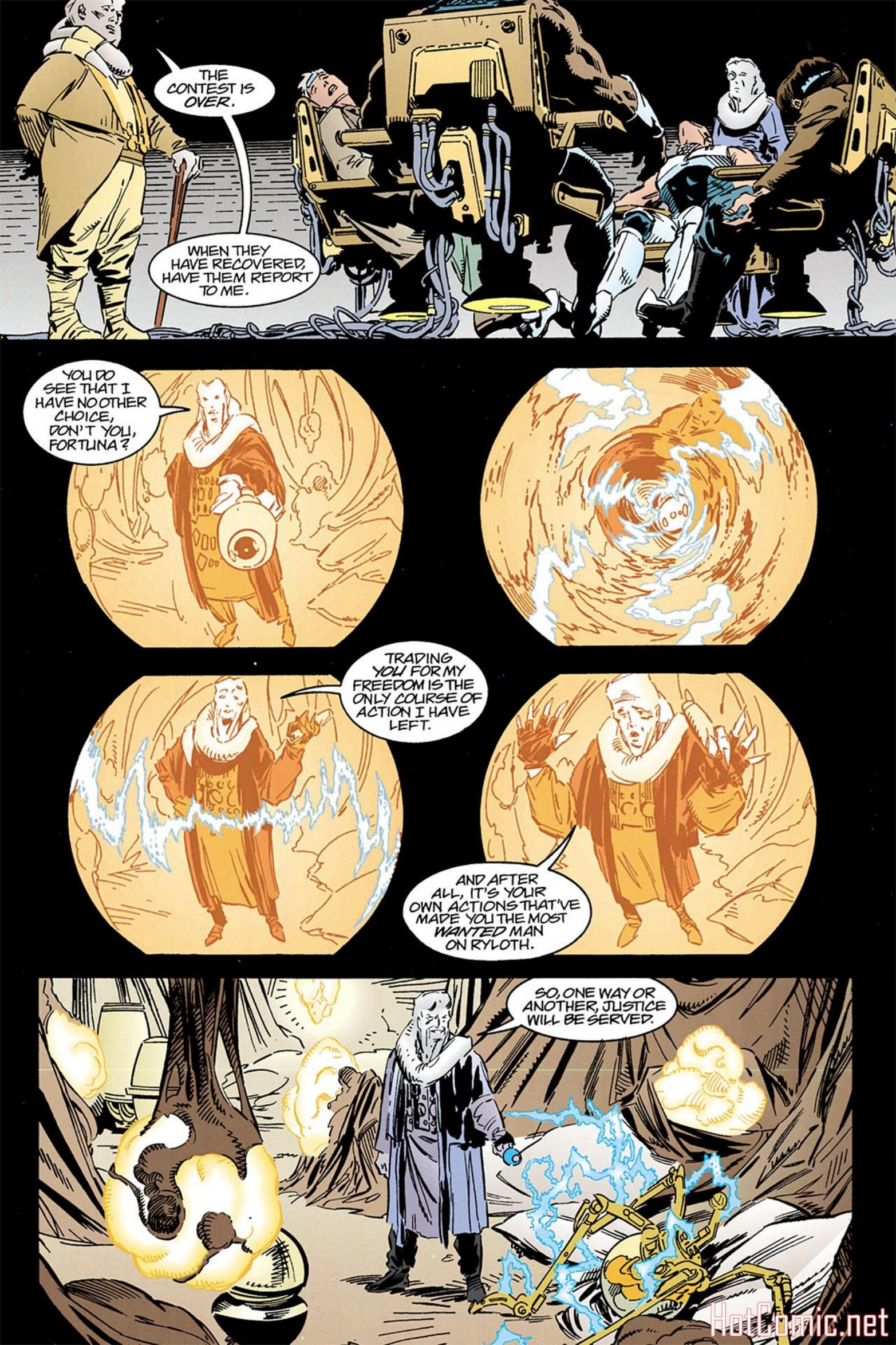
VICTORY! VICTORY!


SORRY, WINTER. SAVING YOUR LIFE COST US THE MISSION.
AND GAINED VERY LITTLE...OR HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED THE SUDDEN INCREASE IN AMBIENT TEMPERATURE?


ON RYLOTH, THAT CAN MEAN ONLY ONE THING--


--HEAT STORM!





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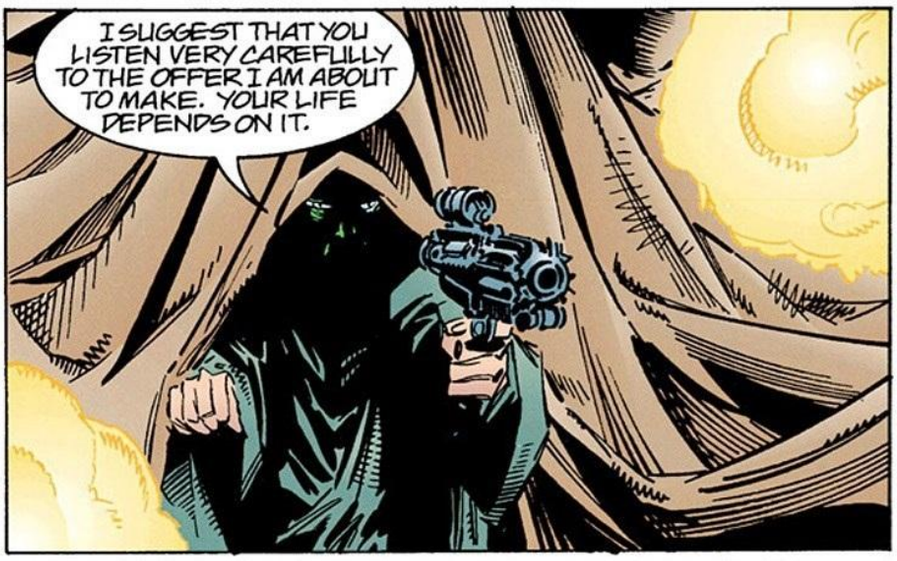
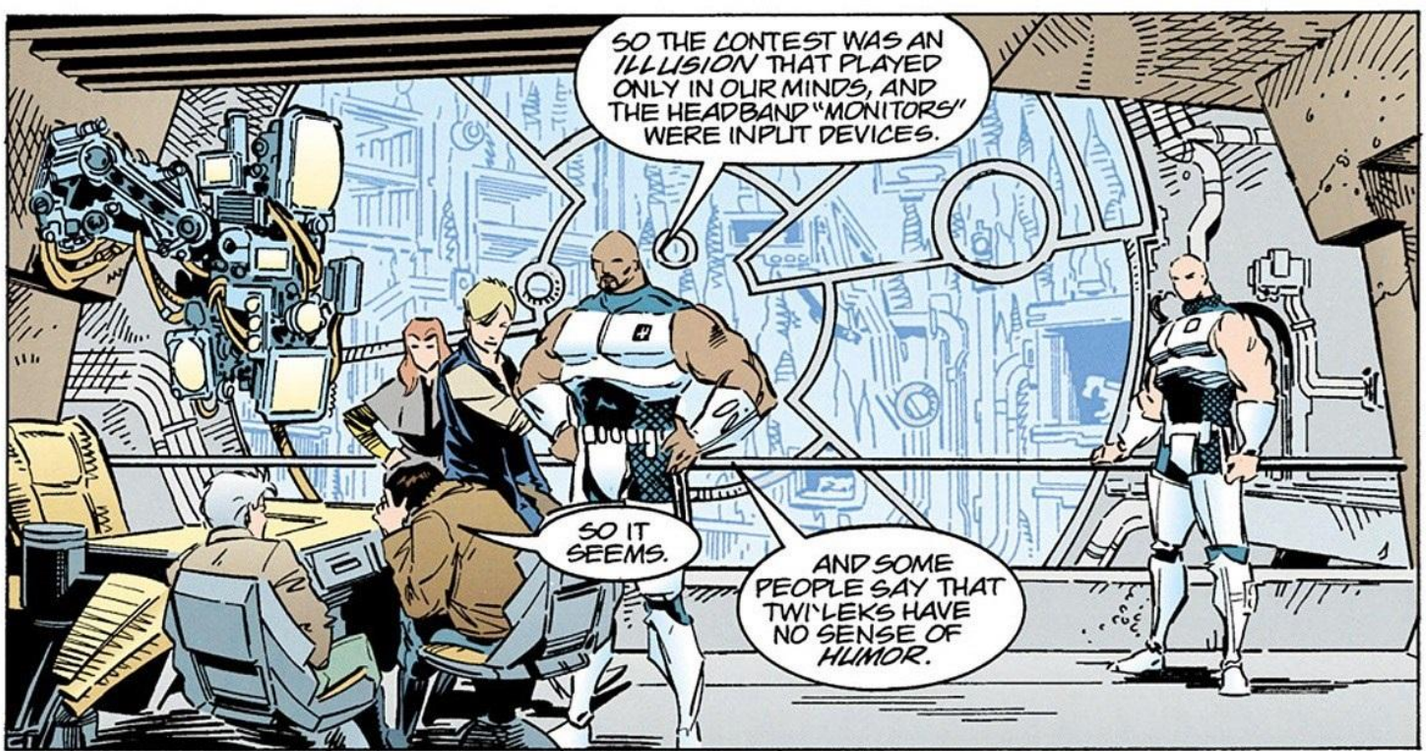
PERHAPS SUCH DRASTIC MEASURES DO NOT NEED TO BE TAKEN, FIRITH OLAN.
WHAT...?!


I SUGGEST THAT YOU LISTEN VERY CAREFULLY TO THE OFFER I AM ABOUT TO MAKE. YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.


SO THE CONTEST WAS AN *ILLUSION* THAT PLAYED ONLY IN OUR MINDS, AND THE HEADBAND "MONITORS" WERE INPUT DEVICES.
SO IT SEEMS.
AND SOME PEOPLE SAY THAT TWI'LEKS HAVE NO SENSE OF *HUMOR*.

NONETHELESS, YOU CONDUCTED YOURSELF WELL, REBEL. MY NAME IS *SIXTUS QUIN*, AND I SALUTE YOU--

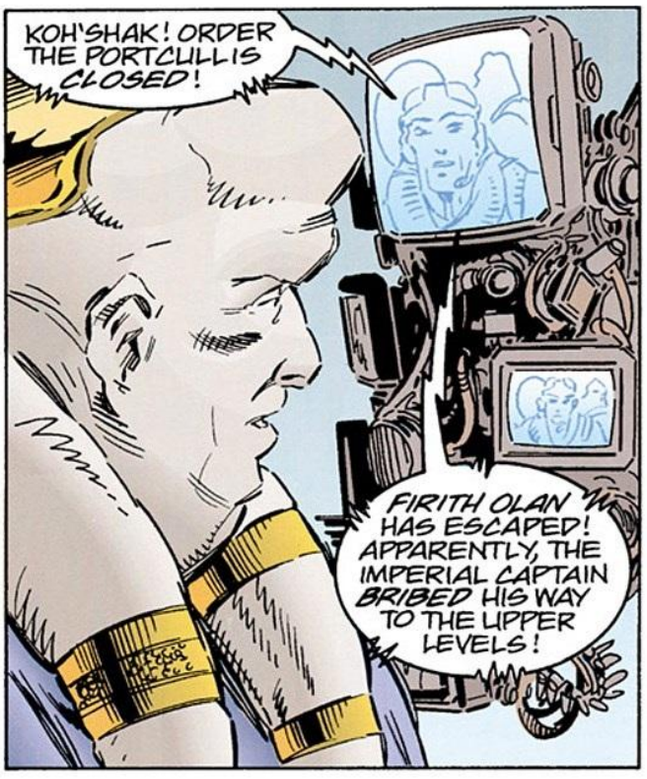
--EVEN THOUGH YOUR DEVOTION TO YOUR COMRADE DID COST YOU THE *CONTEST*.

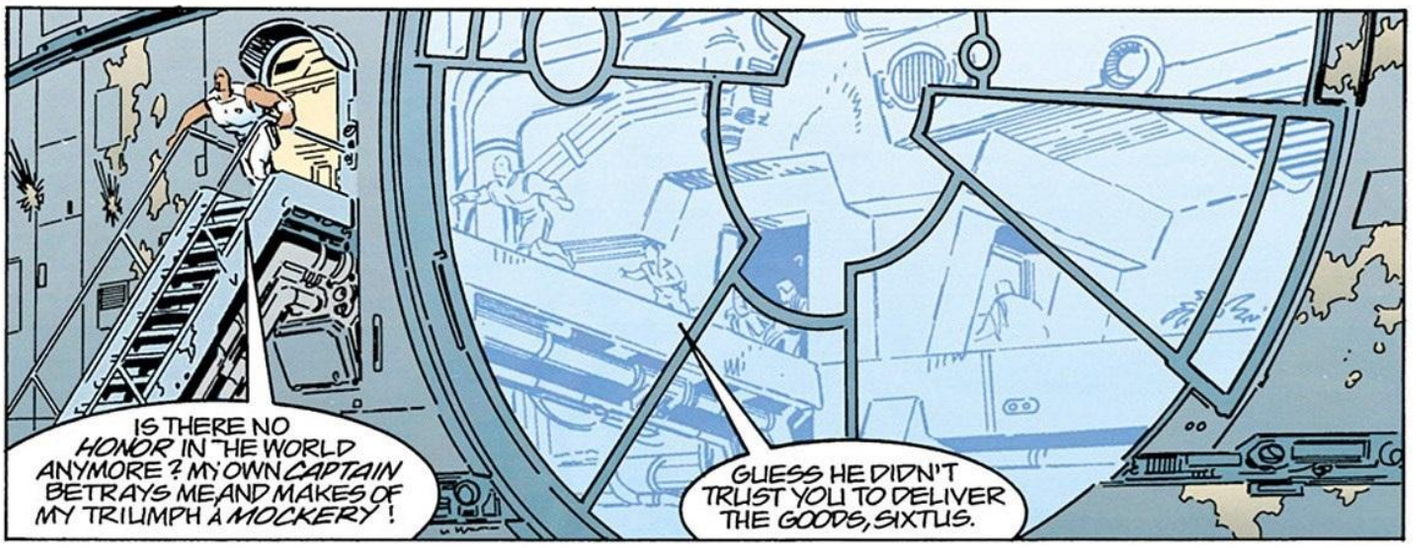
DID I MISS SOMETHING, SIXTUS? WERE YOU APPOINTED JUDGE IN MY ABSENCE?

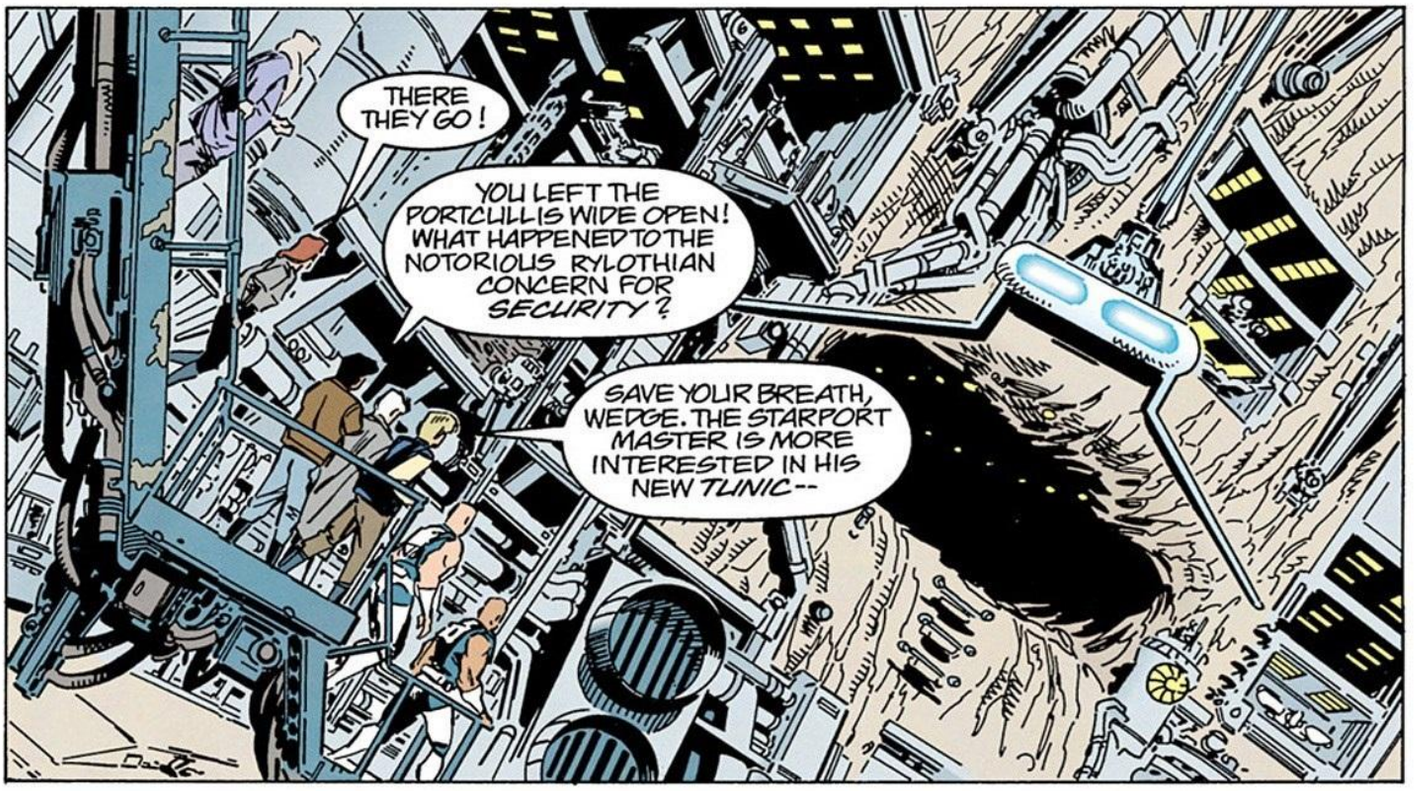
THE RULES WERE CLEAR. THE GOAL WAS THE GLOBE, AND I ATTAINED IT!
THE GLOBE WAS THE STATED GOAL. PERHAPS THE TRUE GOAL WAS SOMETHING LESS TANGIBLE--
--A DISPLAY OF COURAGE, FOR INSTANCE, OR A SACRIFICE.

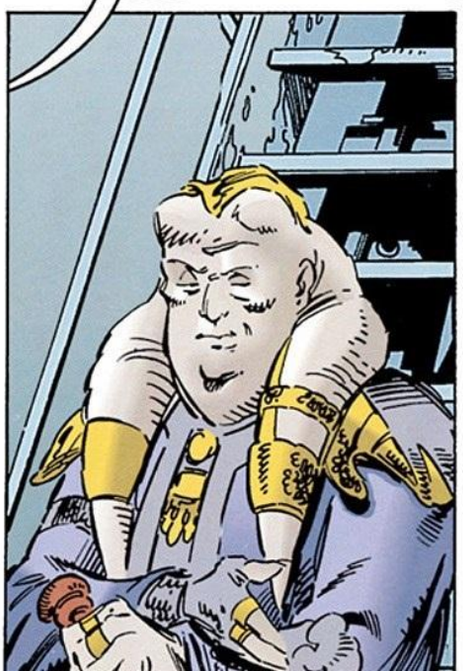
BUT... SUCH A DECEPTION IS UNTHINKABLE!
WELCOME TO RYLOTH, SIXTUS.

THEN... THE ALLIANCE WON!?
NO, THE GOAL WAS THE GLOBE. I WAS JUST MAKING A POINT.


KOH'SHAK! ORDER THE PORTCULLIS CLOSED!
FIRITH OLAN HAS ESCAPED! APPARENTLY, THE IMPERIAL CAPTAIN BRIBED HIS WAY TO THE UPPER LEVELS!

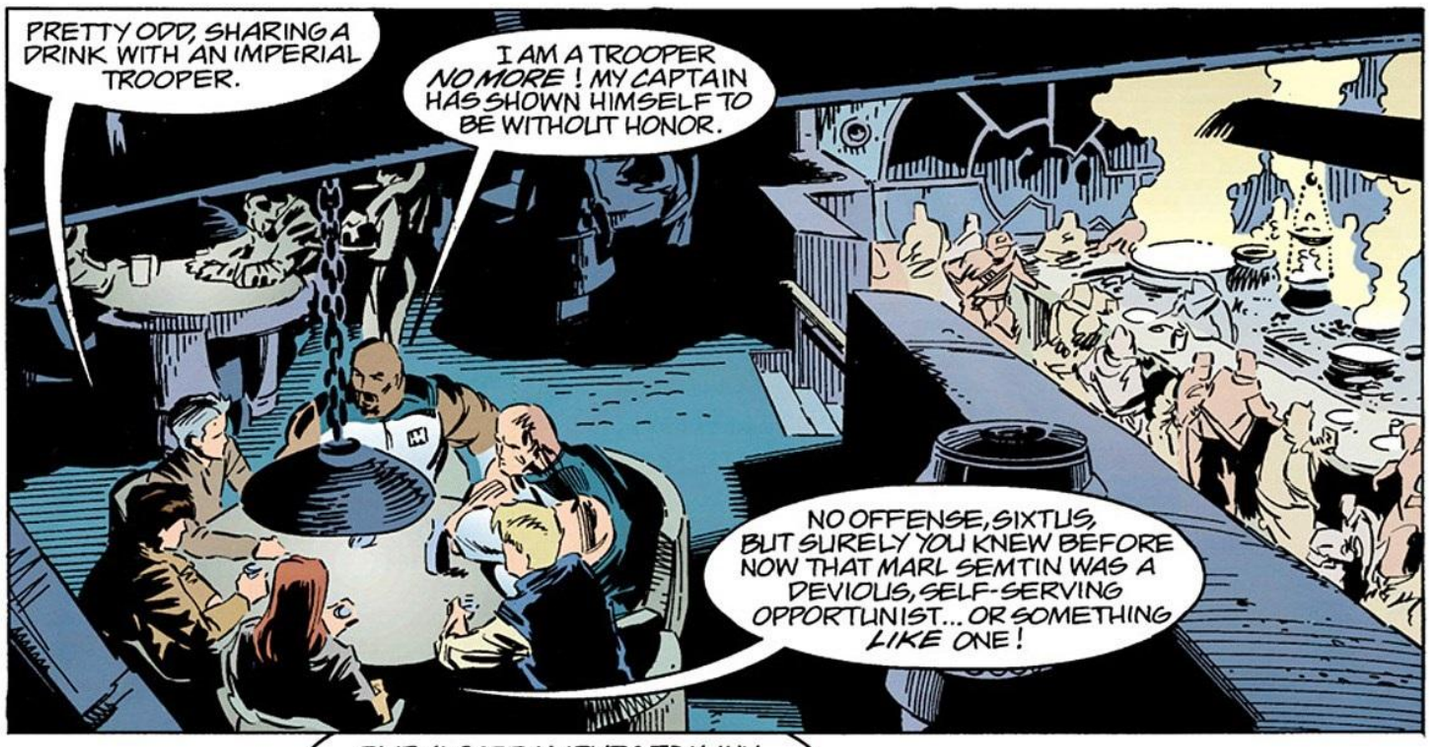

IS THERE NO HONOR IN THE WORLD ANYMORE? MY OWN CAPTAIN BETRAYS ME, AND MAKES OF MY TRIUMPH A MOCKERY!
GUESS HE DIDN'T TRUST YOU TO DELIVER THE GOODS, SIXTUS.

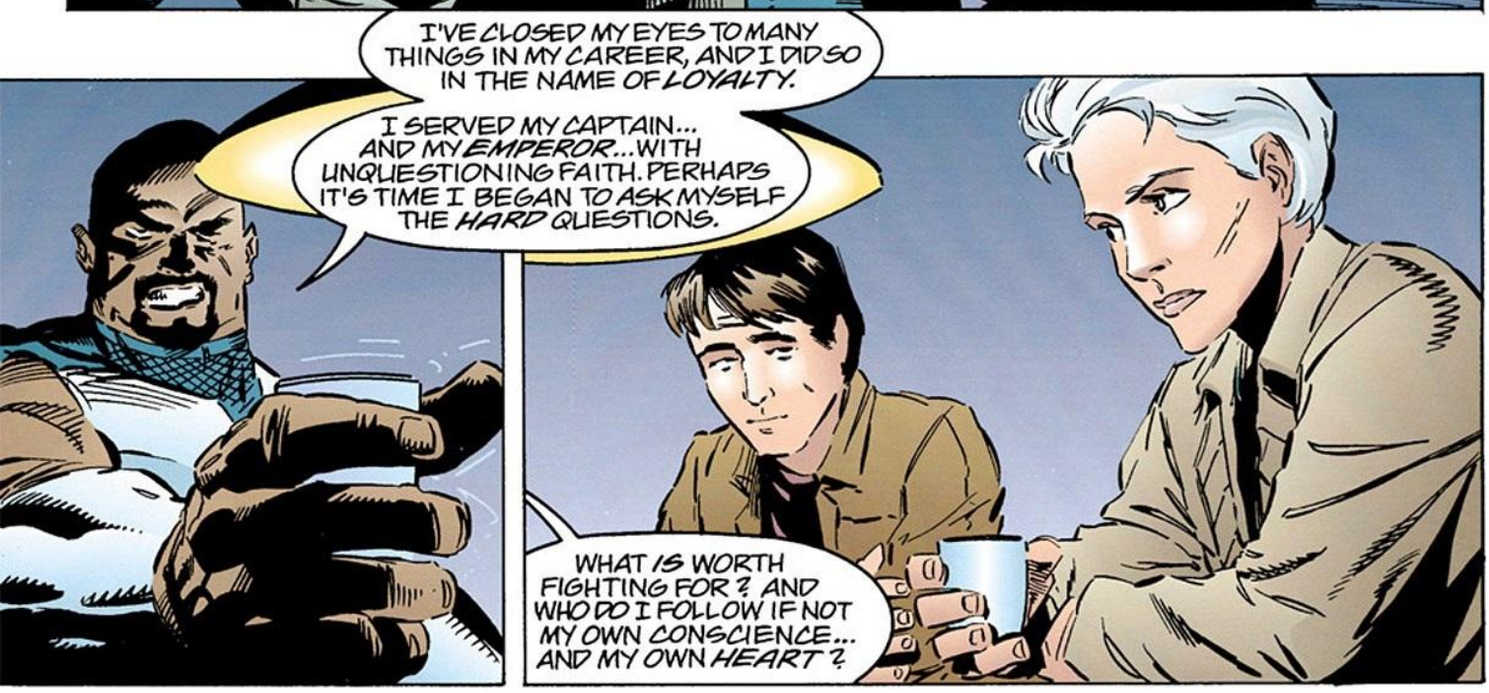

THERE THEY GO!
YOU LEFT THE PORTCULLIS WIDE OPEN! WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NOTORIOUS RYLOTHIAN CONCERN FOR SECURITY?
SAVE YOUR BREATH, WEDGE. THE STARPORT MASTER IS MORE INTERESTED IN HIS NEW TUNIC--

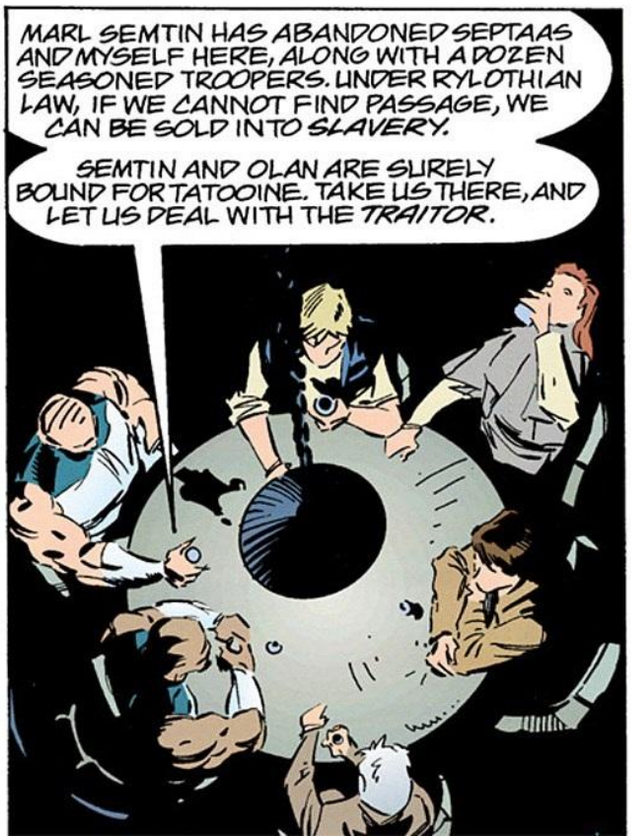

--WHICH YOU WILL NOTICE, IS MADE OF KOOLACH SILK. SEMTIN GOT TO HIM BETTER THAN WE DID.

CLEAR US FOR IMMEDIATE TAKEOFF, OR SO HELP ME, I'LL...!
FORGET IT, TYCHO. OUR SHIP'S HEMMED IN.

I'M SURE KOH'SHAK WILL CLEAR US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
GLADLY, THE SOONER TO BE RID OF YOU.

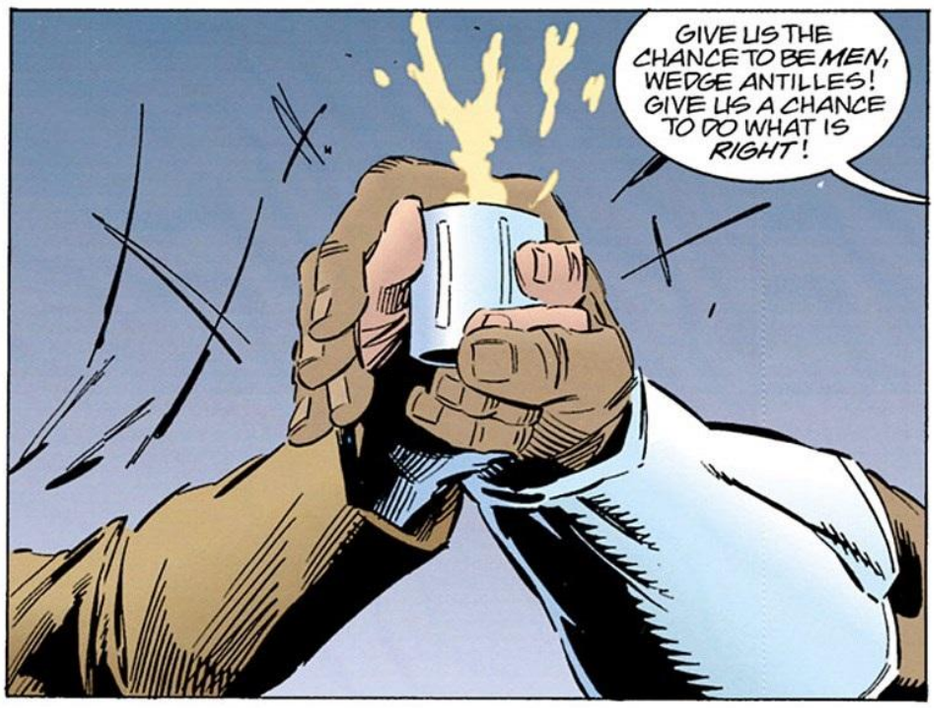

PRETTY ODD, SHARING A DRINK WITH AN IMPERIAL TROOPER.
I AM A TROOPER *NO MORE*! MY CAPTAIN HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE WITHOUT HONOR.
NO OFFENSE, SIXTUS, BUT SURELY YOU KNEW BEFORE NOW THAT MARL SEMTIN WAS A DEVIOUS, SELF-SERVING OPPORTUNIST... OR SOMETHING *LIKE* ONE!

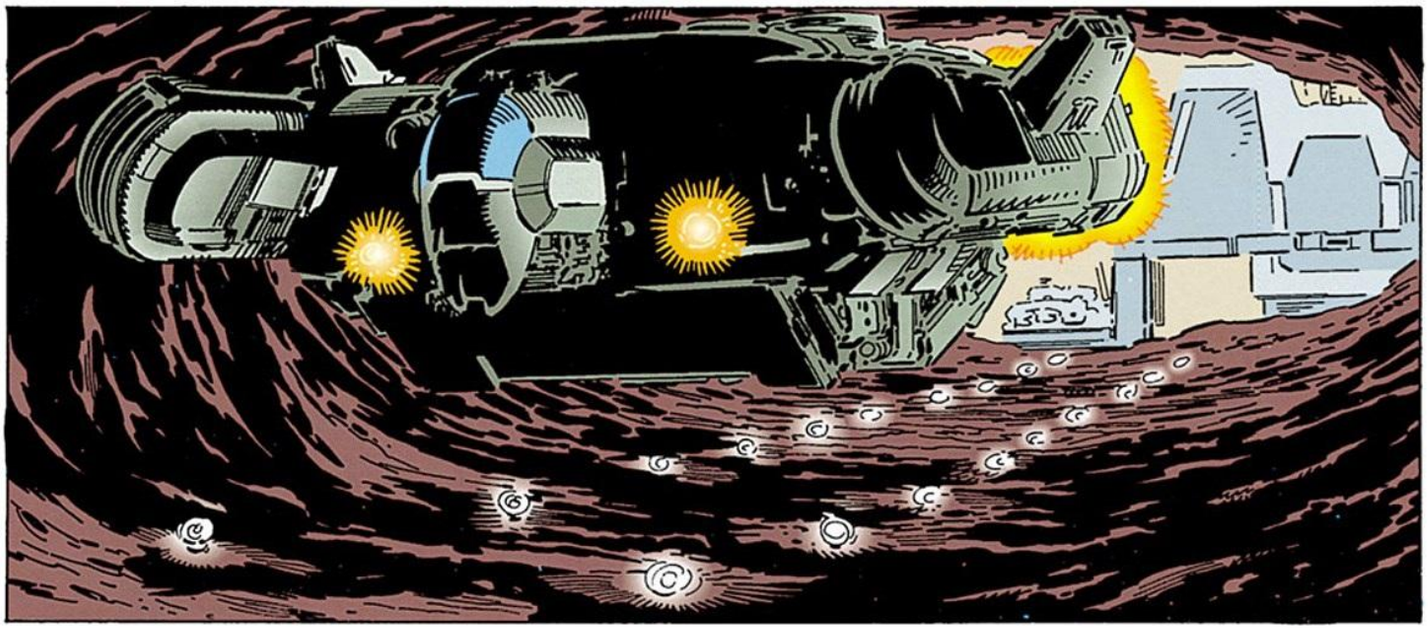

I'VE CLOSED MY EYES TO MANY THINGS IN MY CAREER, AND I DID SO IN THE NAME OF *LOYALTY*.
I SERVED MY CAPTAIN... AND MY *EMPEROR*... WITH UNQUESTIONING FAITH. PERHAPS IT'S TIME I BEGAN TO ASK MYSELF THE *HARD* QUESTIONS.
WHAT *IS* WORTH FIGHTING FOR? AND WHO DO I FOLLOW IF NOT MY OWN CONSCIENCE... AND MY OWN *HEART*?

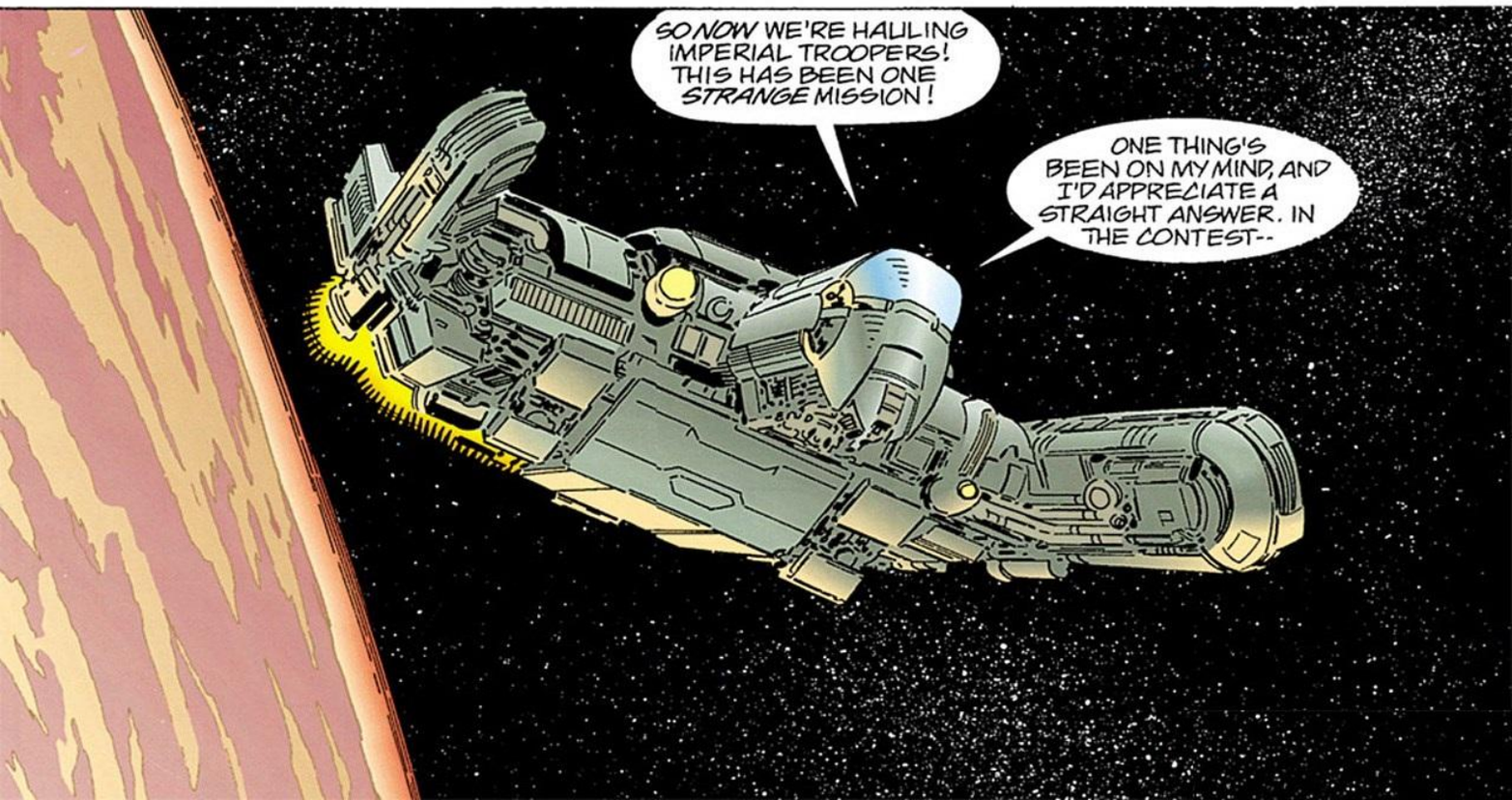

MARL SEMTIN HAS ABANDONED SEPTAAS AND MYSELF HERE, ALONG WITH A DOZEN SEASONED TROOPERS. UNDER RYLOTHIAN LAW, IF WE CANNOT FIND PASSAGE, WE CAN BE SOLD INTO *SLAVERY*.
SEMTIN AND OLAN ARE SURELY BOUND FOR TATOOINE. TAKE US THERE, AND LET US DEAL WITH THE *TRAITOR*.

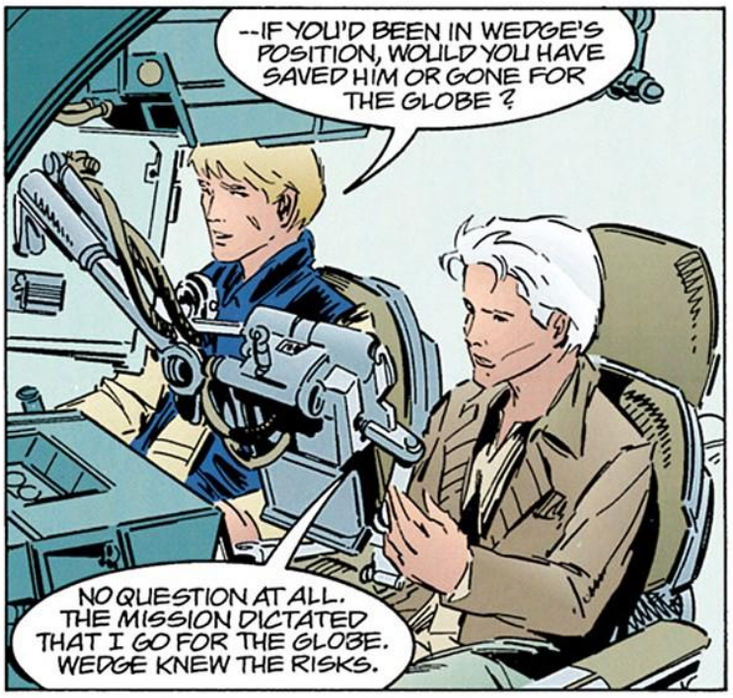
YOU THINK I SHOULD HELP YOU AND YOUR TROOPERS CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR THE *EMPIRE*?
NO! NOT FOR THE EMPIRE, BUT FOR *HONOR*!

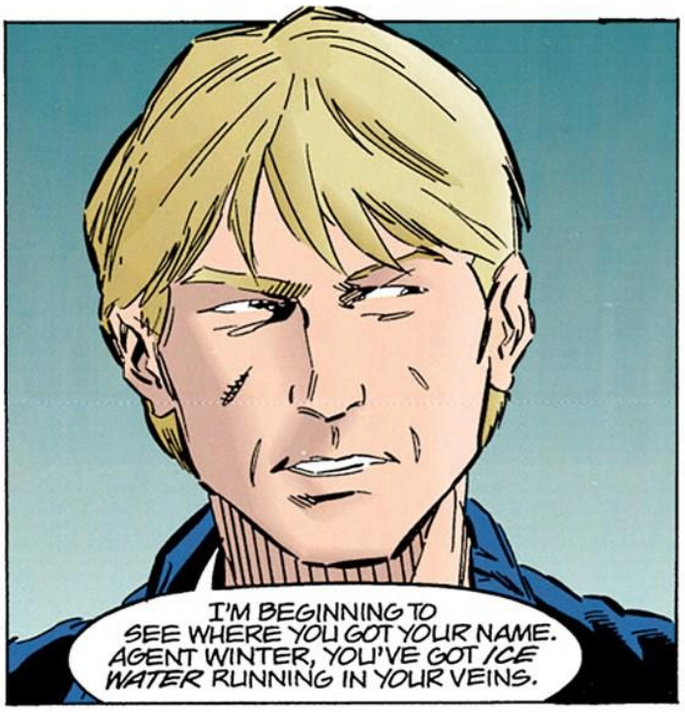
WE WERE TRAINED TO BE LOYAL, BUT WHO IS LOYAL TO *US*? NOT THOSE ABOVE US! TO THEM WE ARE ONLY *DROIDS*, INCONSEQUENTIAL AND *EXPENDABLE*.

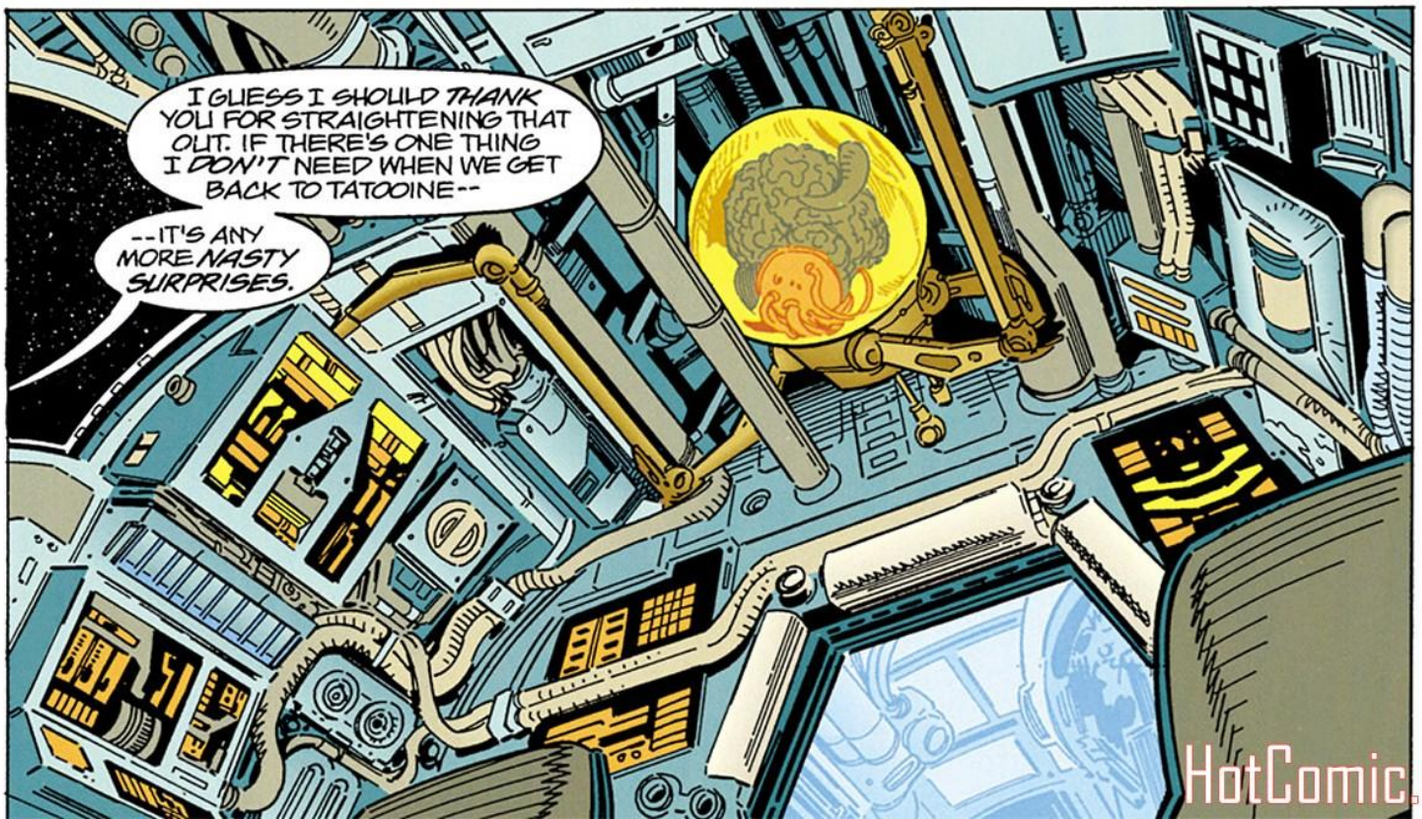

GIVE US THE CHANCE TO BE *MEN*, WEDGE ANTILLES! GIVE US A CHANCE TO DO WHAT IS *RIGHT*!




SO NOW WE'RE HAULING IMPERIAL TROOPERS! THIS HAS BEEN ONE *STRANGE* MISSION!
ONE THING'S BEEN ON MY MIND, AND I'D APPRECIATE A STRAIGHT ANSWER. IN THE CONTEST--







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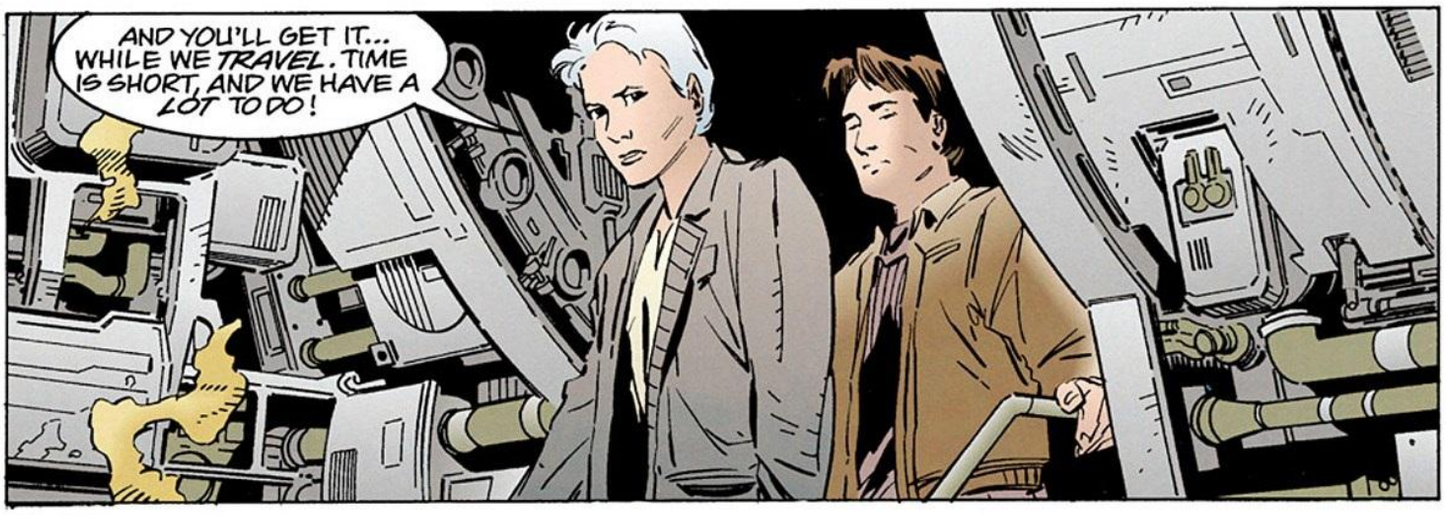
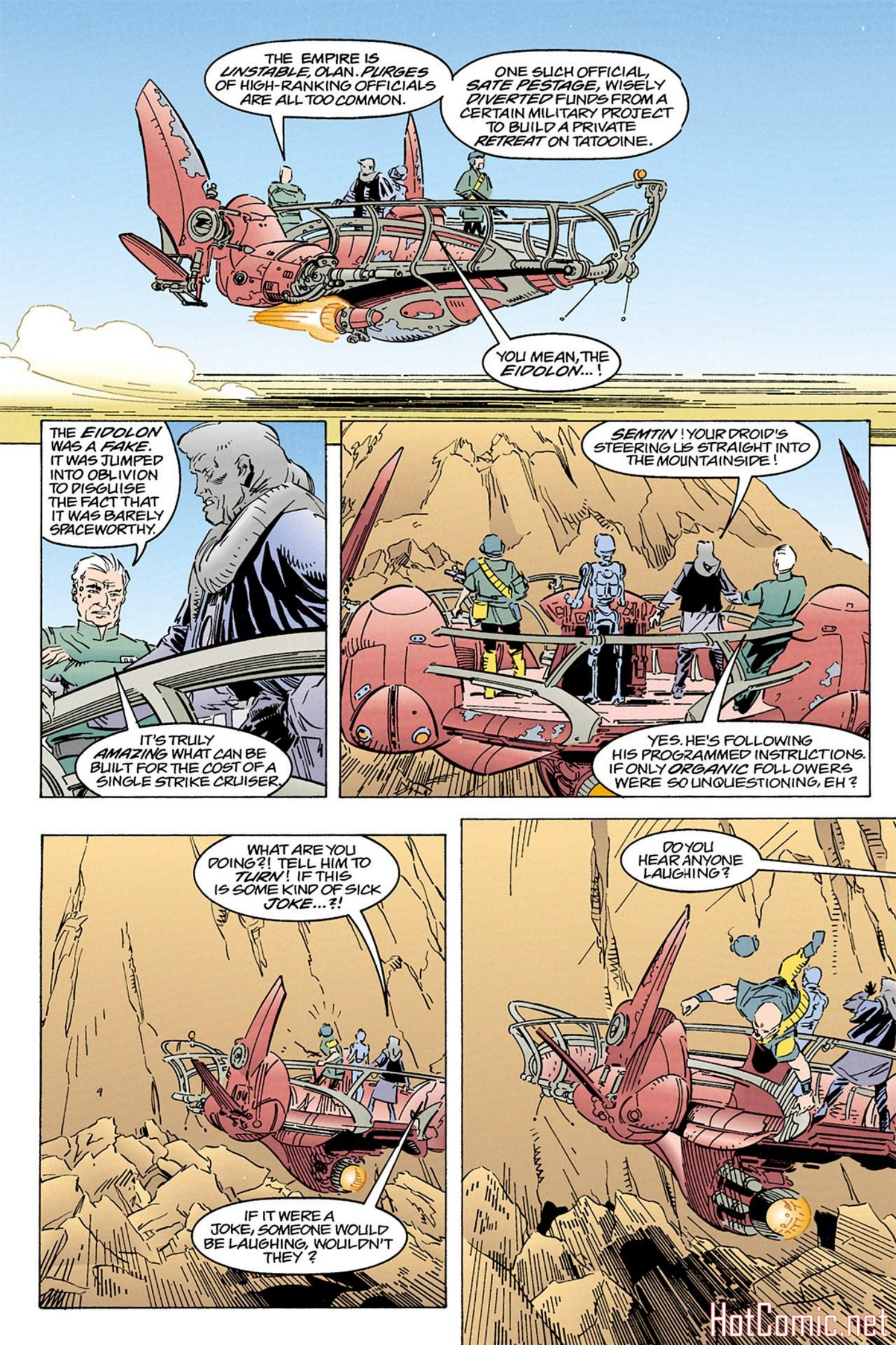
PERSONALLY, I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO SHOOTING DOWN A FEW IMPS!
YOU SAID IT, PLOURR! I DIDN'T COME TO TATOOINE JUST TO RIDE HERD ON THE LOCAL WARLORDS!
WHAT IN THE--!?
IMPERIAL SPECIAL FORCES TROOPERS!
WE'VE BEEN HAD!
WAIT! IF THEY WANTED TO KILL US, THEY'D HAVE COME OUT BLASTING!
WINTER TOLD US TO BE PREPARED FOR A SHOCK! THIS MUST BE IT!
SHE ALSO PROMISED US AN EXPLANATION.


AND YOU'LL GET IT... WHILE WE TRAVEL. TIME IS SHORT, AND WE HAVE A LOT TO DO!



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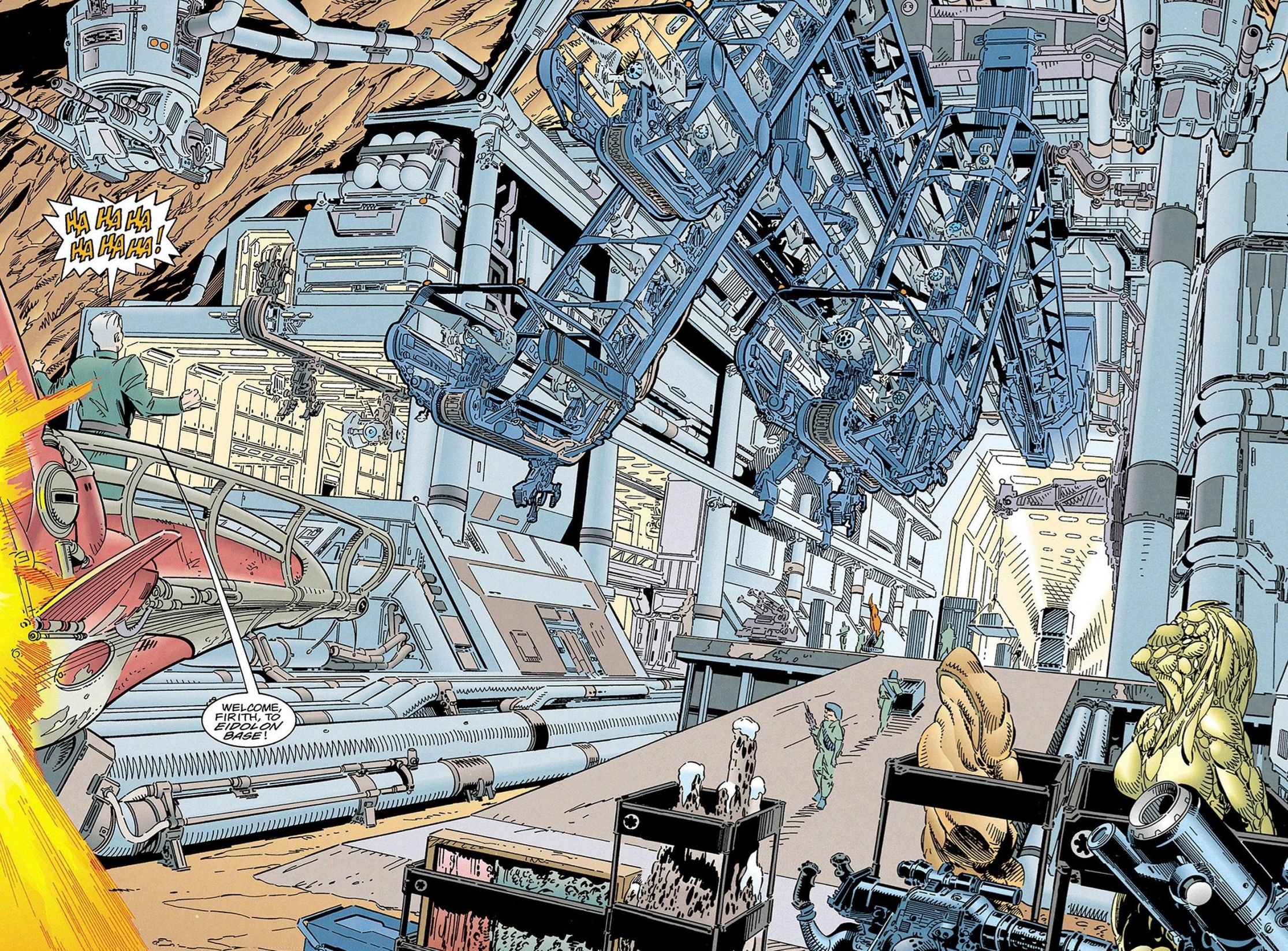
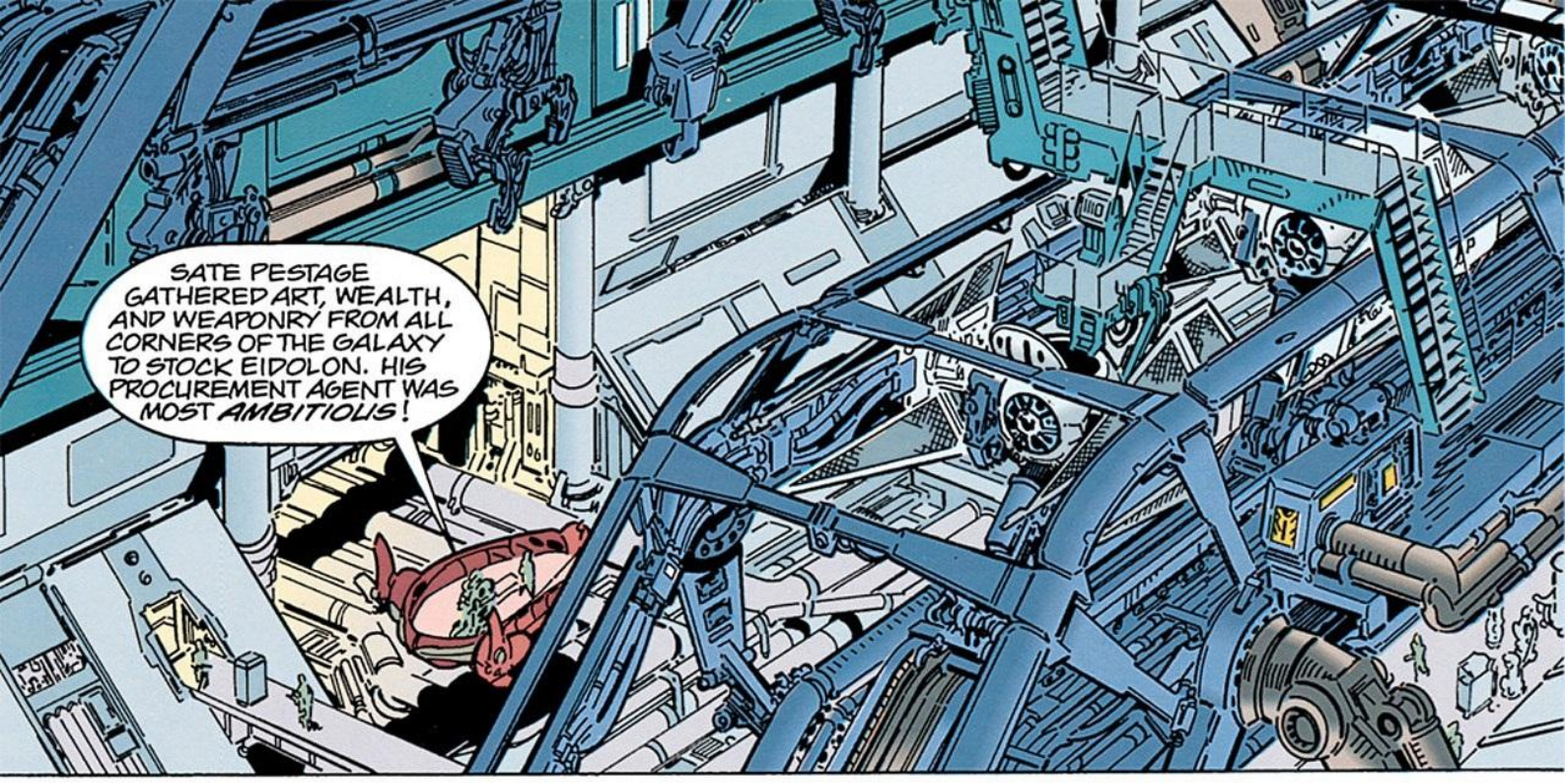
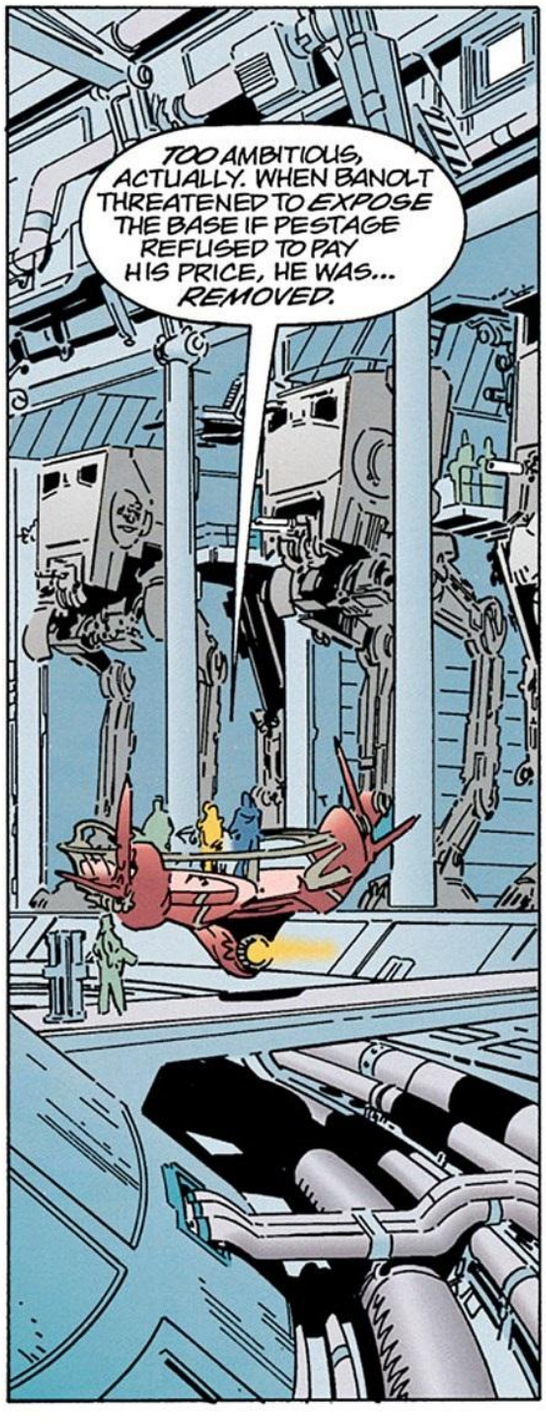
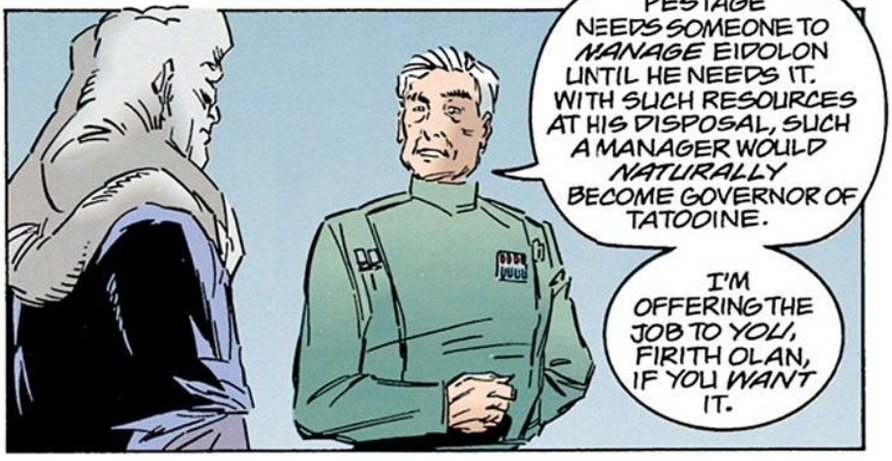
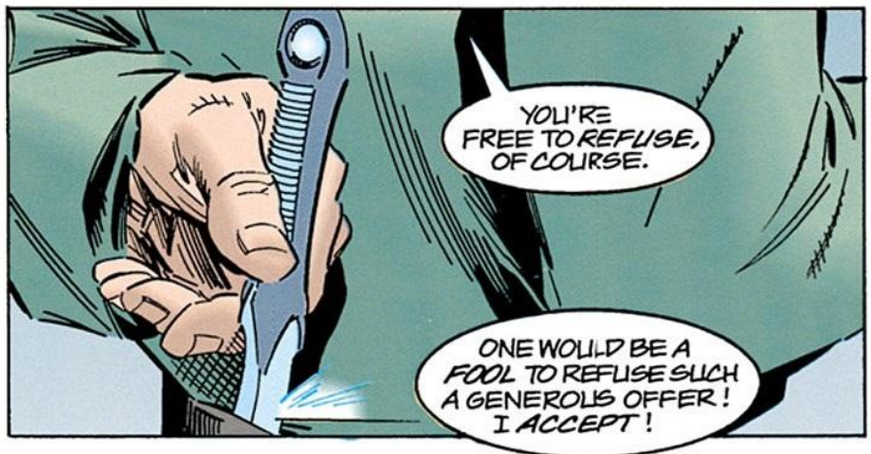

HA HA HA HA HA HA!
WELCOME, FIRITH, TO EIDOLON BASE!

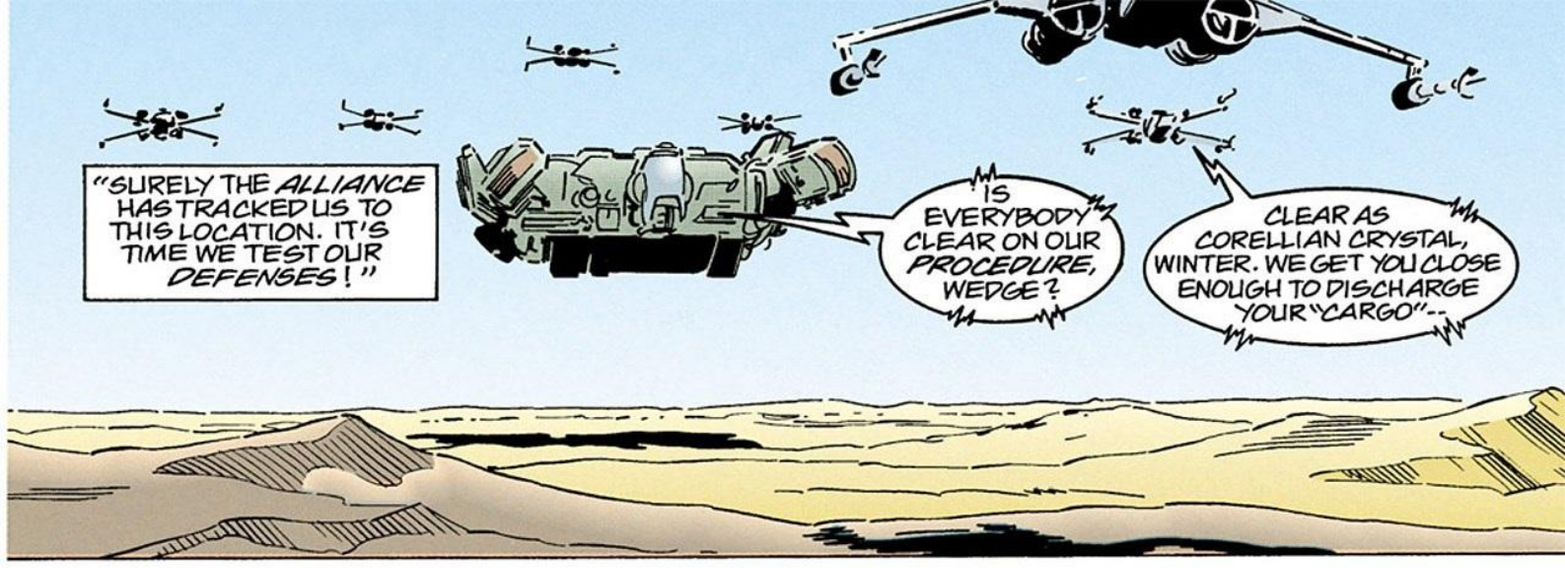

SATE PESTAGE GATHERED ART, WEALTH, AND WEAPONRY FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE GALAXY TO STOCK EIDOLON. HIS PROCUREMENT AGENT WAS MOST *AMBITIOUS*!


TOO AMBITIOUS, ACTUALLY. WHEN BANOLT THREATENED TO *EXPOSE* THE BASE IF PESTAGE REFUSED TO PAY HIS PRICE, HE WAS... *REMOVED*.


PESTAGE NEEDS SOMEONE TO *MANAGE* EIDOLON UNTIL HE NEEDS IT. WITH SUCH RESOURCES AT HIS DISPOSAL, SUCH A MANAGER WOULD *NATURALLY* BECOME GOVERNOR OF TATOOINE.
I'M OFFERING THE JOB TO *YOU*, FIRITH OLAN, IF YOU *WANT* IT.

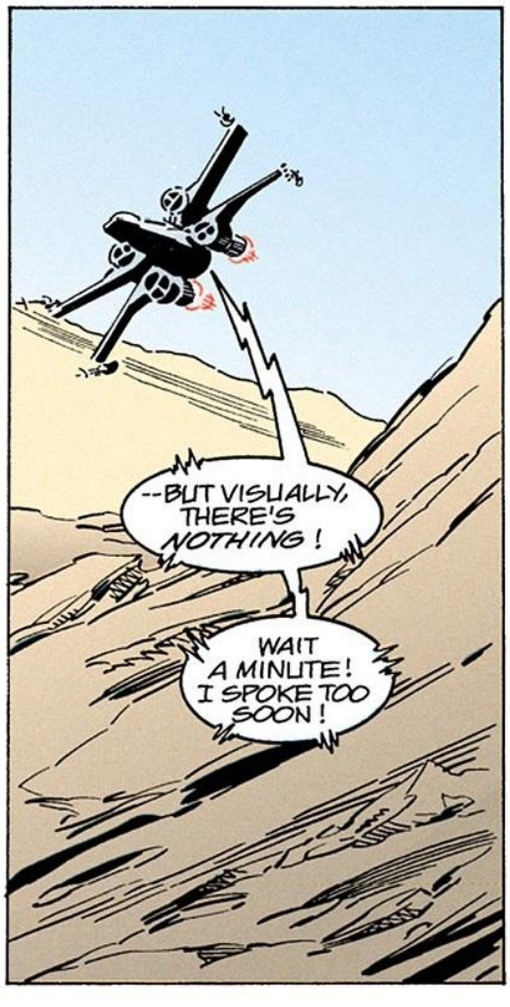

YOU'RE FREE TO *REFUSE*, OF COURSE.
ONE WOULD BE A *FOOL* TO REFUSE SUCH A GENEROUS OFFER! I *ACCEPT*!

GOOD! NOW WE SHOULD READY OURSELVES FOR *ATTACK*!


"SURELY THE ALLIANCE HAS TRACKED US TO THIS LOCATION. IT'S TIME WE TEST OUR DEFENSES!"
IS EVERYBODY CLEAR ON OUR PROCEDURE, WEDGE?
CLEAR AS CORELLIAN CRYSTAL, WINTER. WE GET YOU CLOSE ENOUGH TO DISCHARGE YOUR "CARGO"--

--AND THE "CARGO" DOES THE REST.
EXPECT HEAVY RESISTANCE. IF ROGUE SQUADRON GETS OUT OF THIS ONE WITHOUT CASUALTIES...

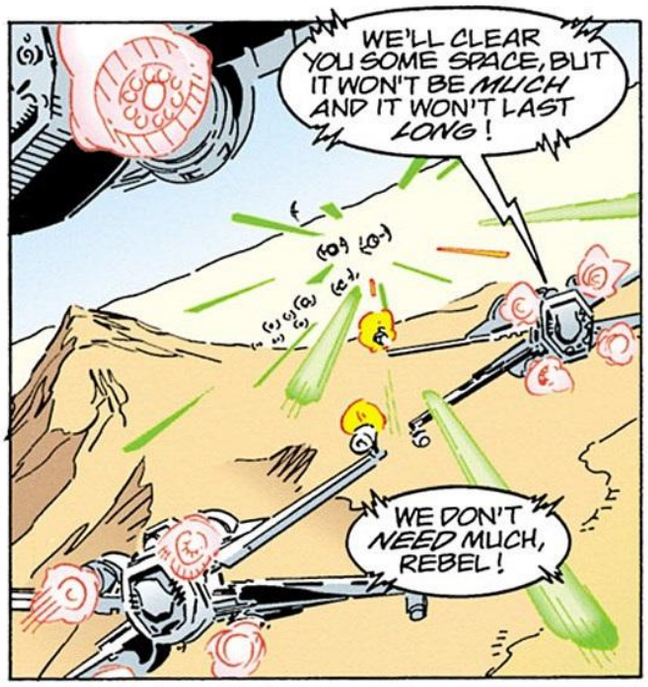
SAY NO MORE, WINTER. WE ALL KNOW THE RISK.
PROBLEM, WEDGE. INSTRUMENTS ARE PICKING UP PLENTY OF ACTIVITY--


--BUT VISUALLY, THERE'S NOTHING!
WAIT A MINUTE! I SPOKE TOO SOON!

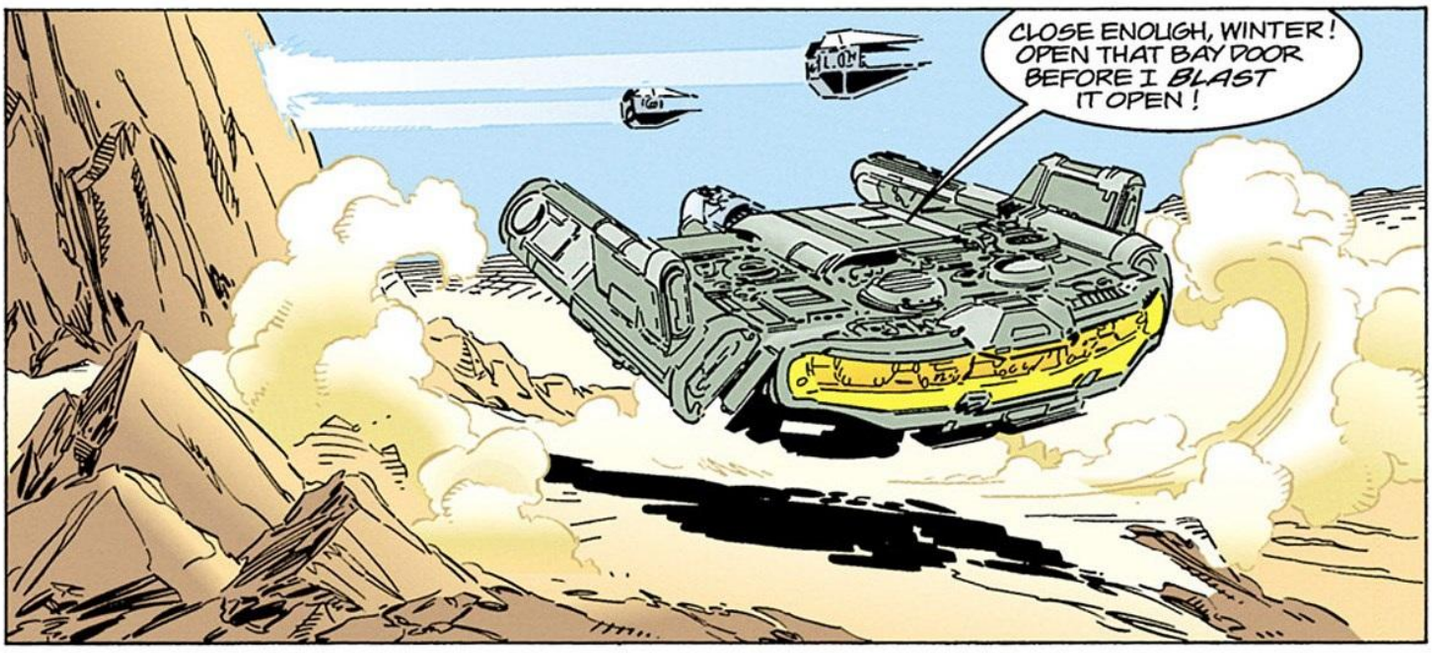
THERE'S A DEAD IMP AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN!
GET OUT OF THERE, TYCHO!

IT'S A TRAP! MY THERMAL SENSORS ARE GOING CRAZY!

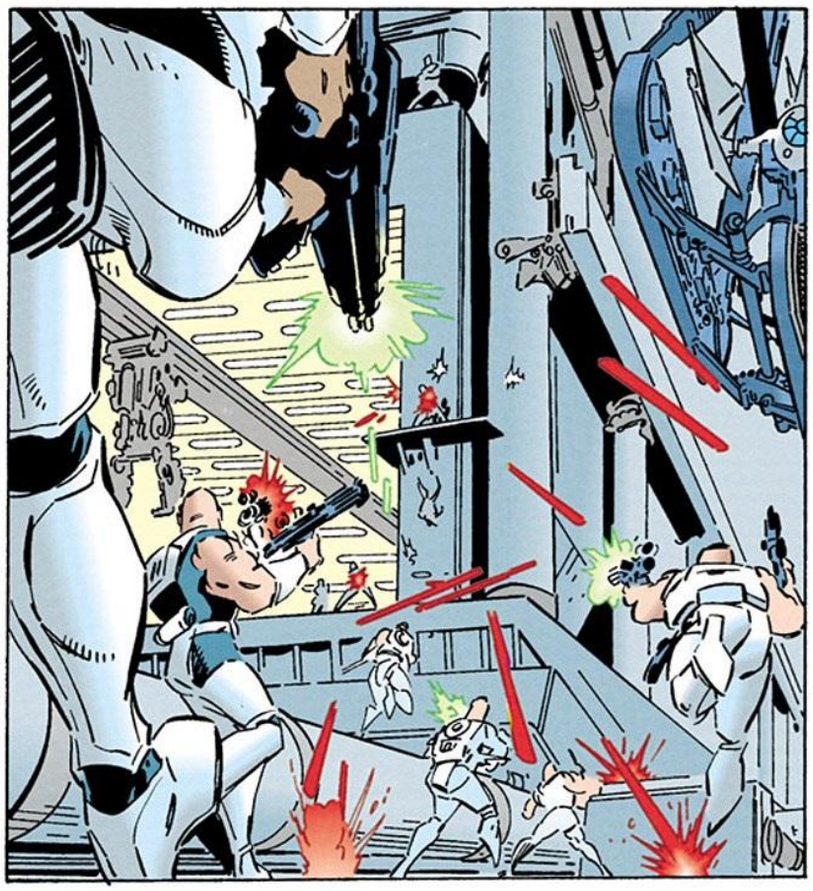
YOW! IT'S A HOLOGRAPHIC PORTAL, WEDGE, RIGHT IN THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN!
WE'RE ON IT! STAY ALIVE, PAL!

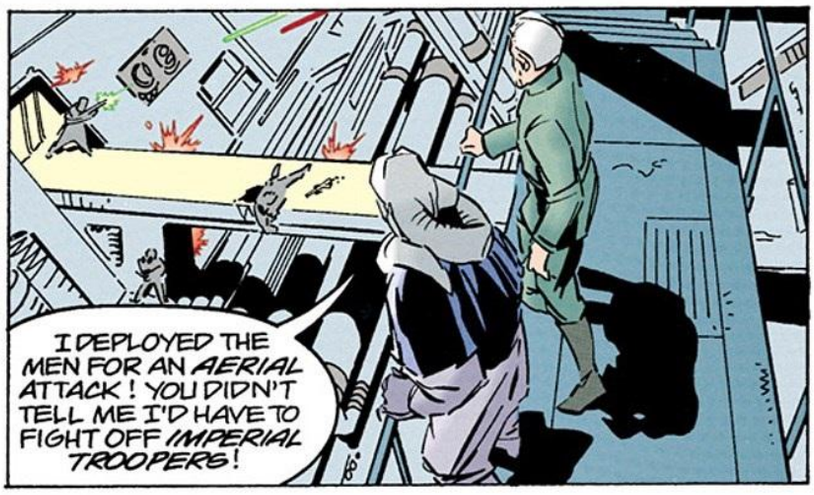

WE'LL CLEAR YOU SOME SPACE, BUT IT WON'T BE MUCH AND IT WON'T LAST LONG!
WE DON'T NEED MUCH, REBEL!

JUST SWAT THOSE FLYING INSECTS OUT OF OUR PATH AND LET US EARN OUR PASSAGE!

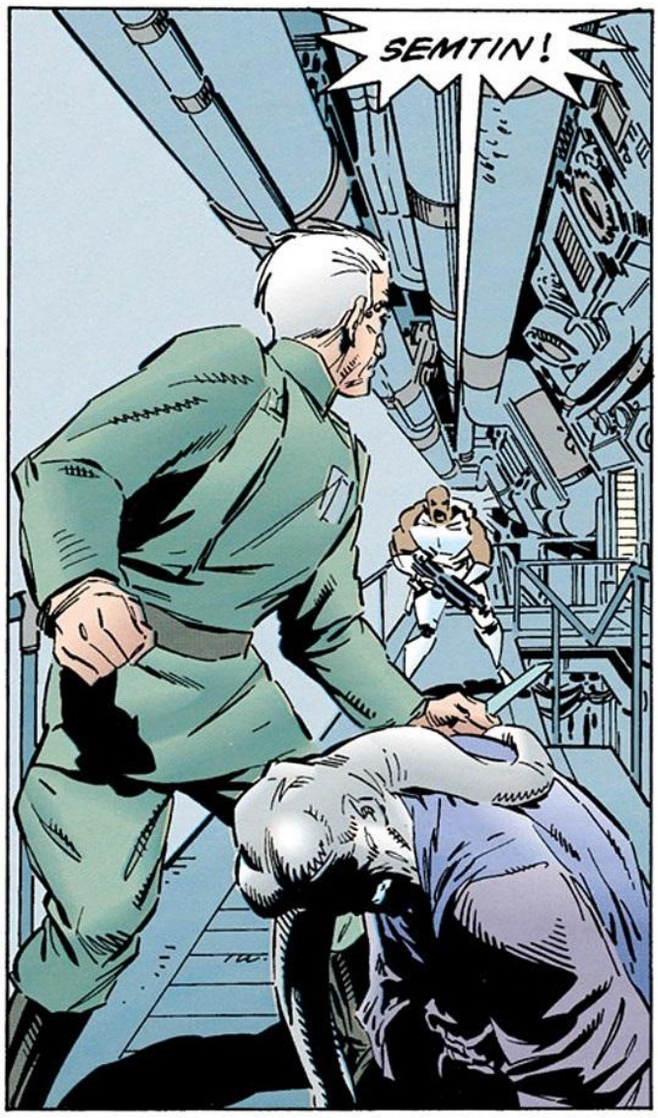

CLOSE ENOUGH, WINTER! OPEN THAT BAY DOOR BEFORE I BLAST IT OPEN!

SEMMM-TIINNNN!




I DEPLOYED THE MEN FOR AN *AERIAL* ATTACK! YOU DIDN'T TELL ME I'D HAVE TO FIGHT OFF *IMPERIAL TROOPERS*!

DON'T THEY REALIZE THIS IS AN *IMPERIAL BASE*? CALL THEM OFF! HURRY... BEFORE THEY *REACH* US!
I KNEW YOU WERE A *CROOK*, FIRITH, BUT I DIDN'T TAKE YOU FOR A *COWARD*!
SADLY, YOU KNOW FAR *TOO MUCH*! WE CAN'T RISK YOUR *CAPTURE* BY THE ALLIANCE!
GAAAUGH!


SEMTIN!

CRUMP

YOU.

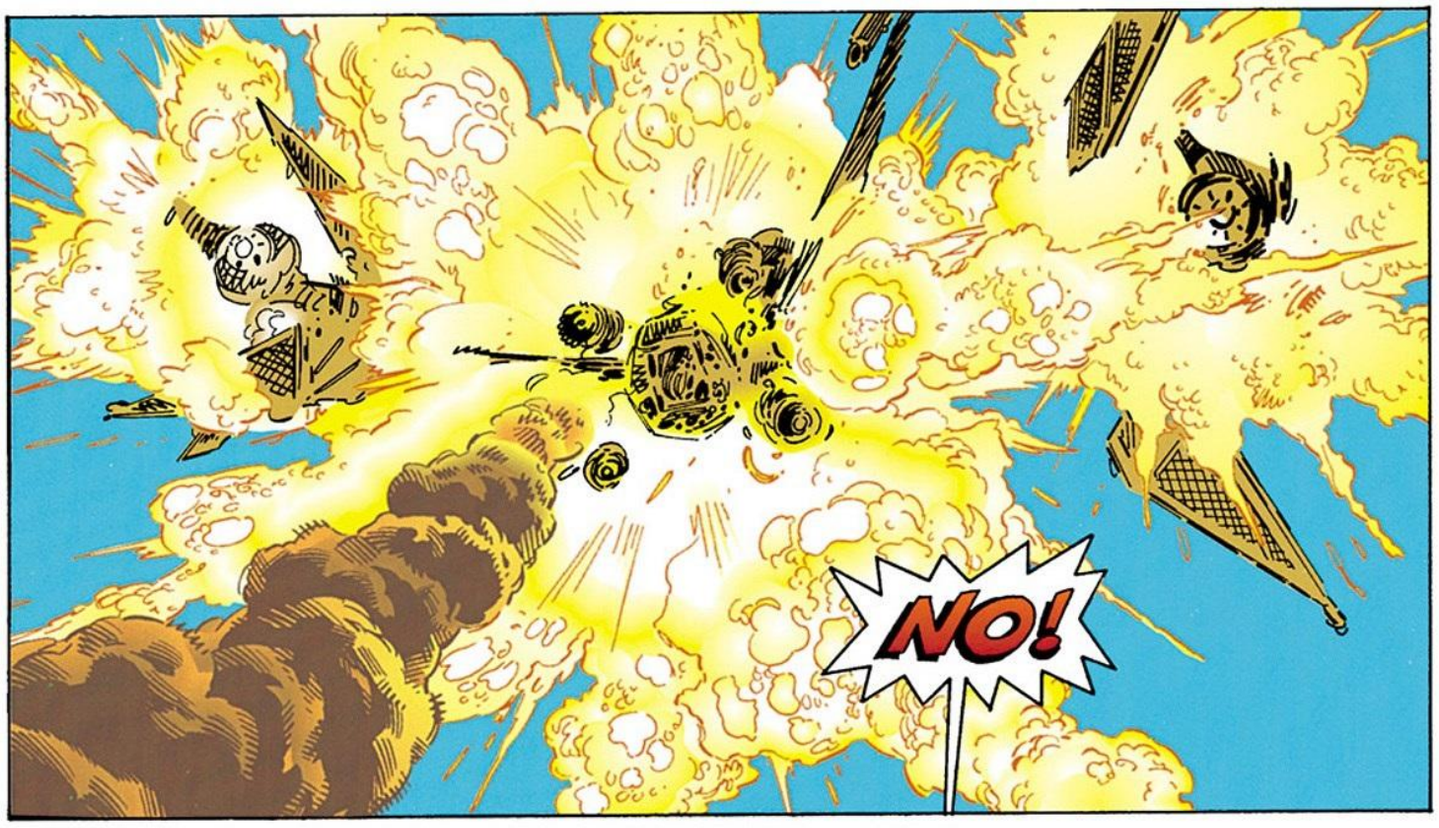
WEDGE, I'M HIT!
I'M STILL AIRBORNE, BUT I'M EASY PICKINGS! TWO SQUINTS COMING IN FOR THE KILL!
I'M COMING, TYCHO, BUT I NEED TIME!
THAT'S ONE THING I HAVEN'T GOT, BUDDY!
TYCHO, THIS IS WINTER! BREAK OFF! HEAD FOR THE SAND!
AGENT WINTER... DO I DETECT A NOTE OF CONCERN IN YOUR VOICE?

TYCHO, LISTEN TO ME! HEAD FOR THE SAND! IT'S YOUR ONLY HOPE!
SORRY, BOSS--

--BUT I'M GOING OUT WITH A BANG! YOU GOT THAT, WEDGE? STAY CLEAR!

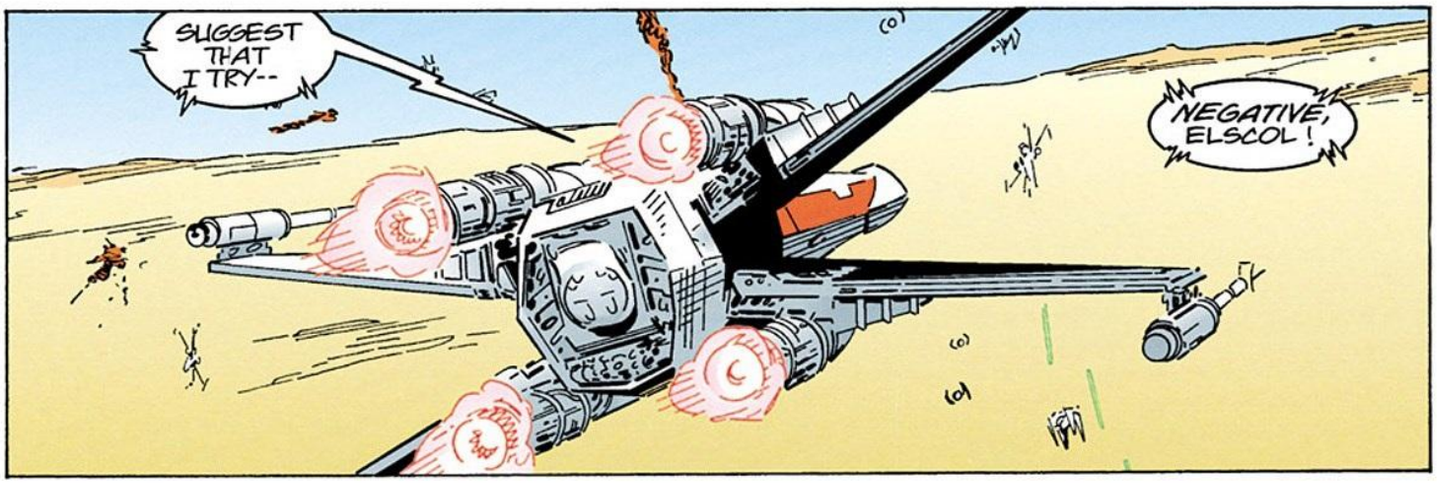
TYCHO, COME IN! TYCHO! ANSWER ME, DAMN IT!

TYCHO... NO!

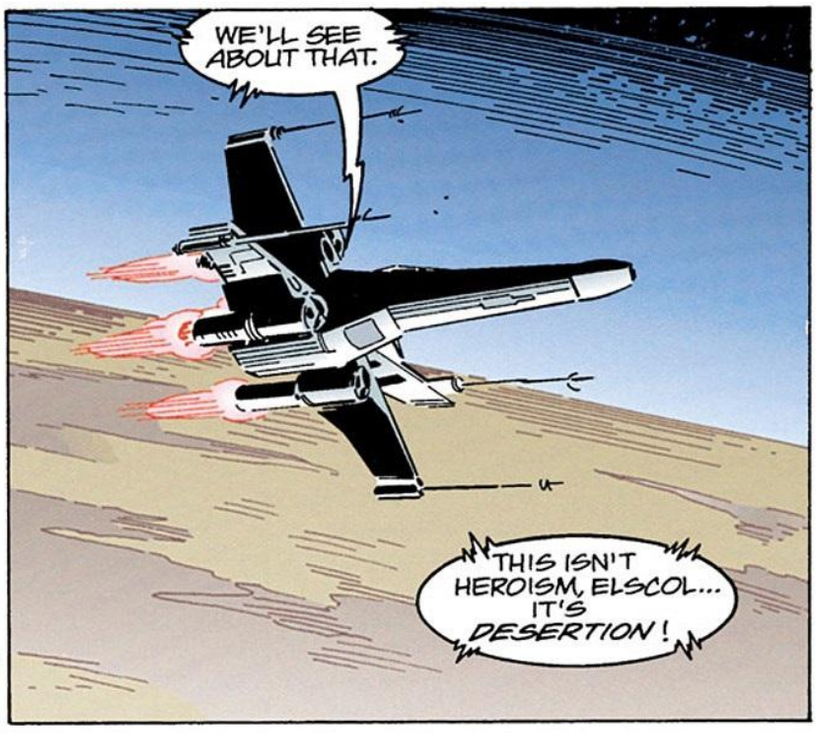

NO!

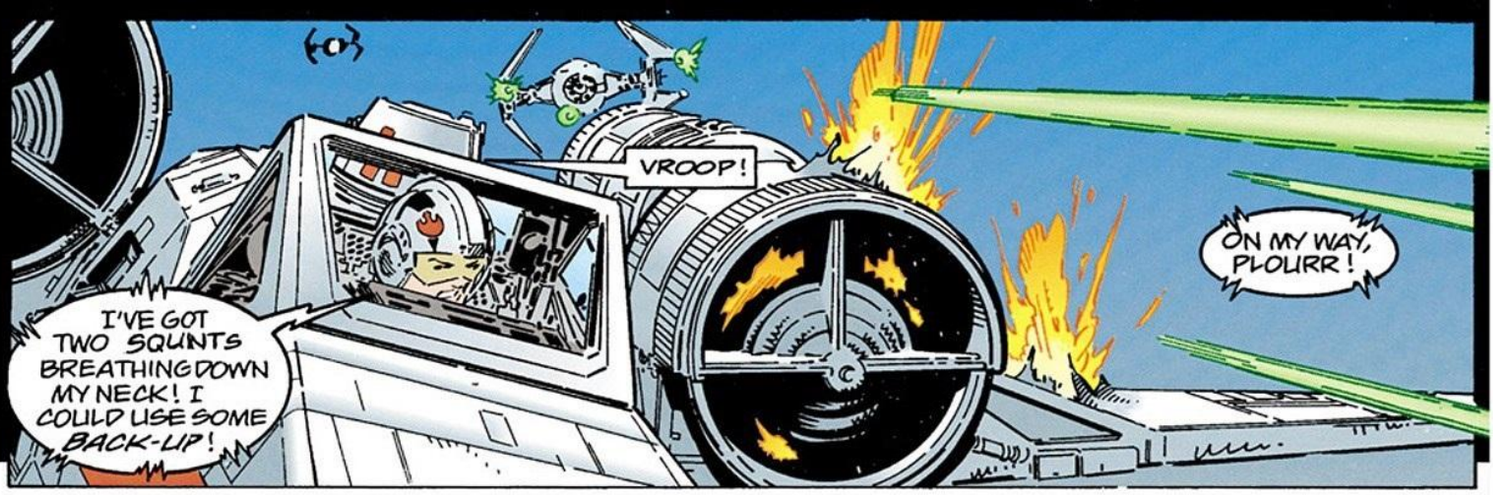
NO...
WEDGE, COME IN... THIS IS ELSCOL. I HAVE TO POINT OUT, CAPTAIN--

--THAT WE STILL HAVE AN IMPERIAL DESTROYER IN ORBIT. IT CAN RAIN A PLANETARY BOMBARDMENT ON THIS ENTIRE REGION!

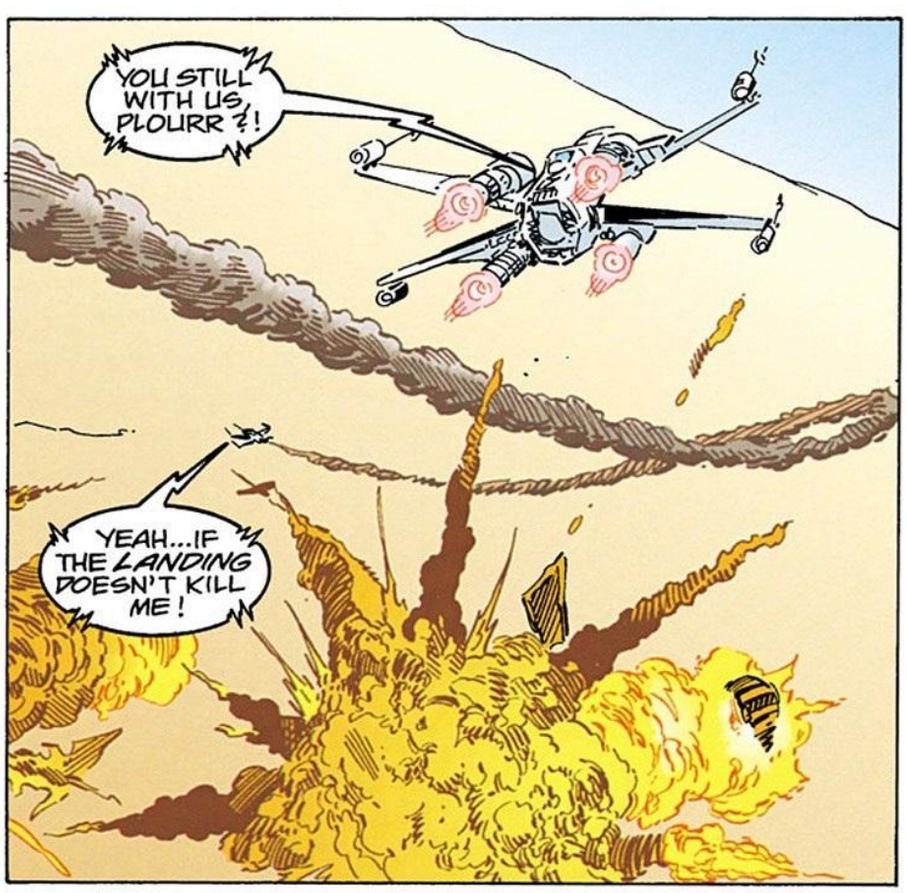

SUGGEST THAT I TRY--
NEGATIVE, ELSCOL!

WE NEED EVERY X-WING WE'VE GOT! THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT THE DESTROYER!

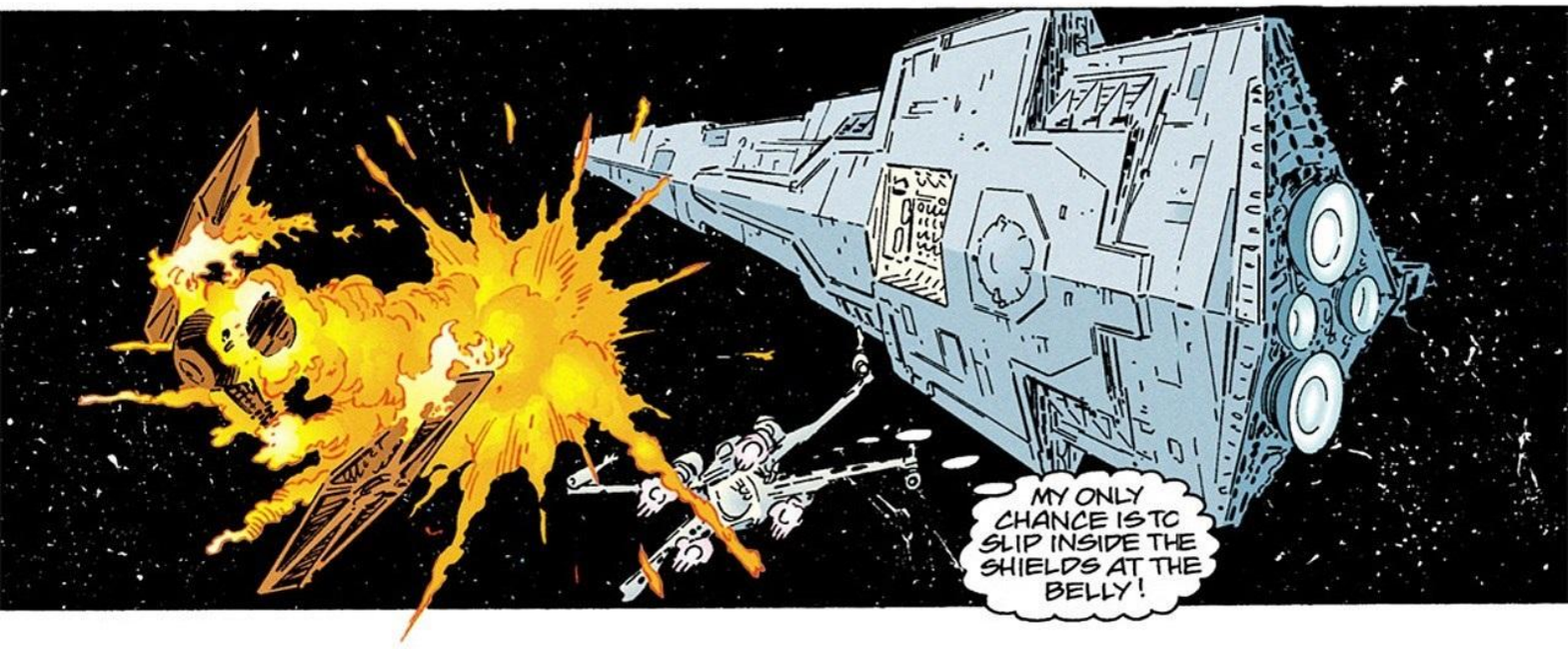

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT.
THIS ISN'T HEROISM, ELSCOL... IT'S DESERTION!

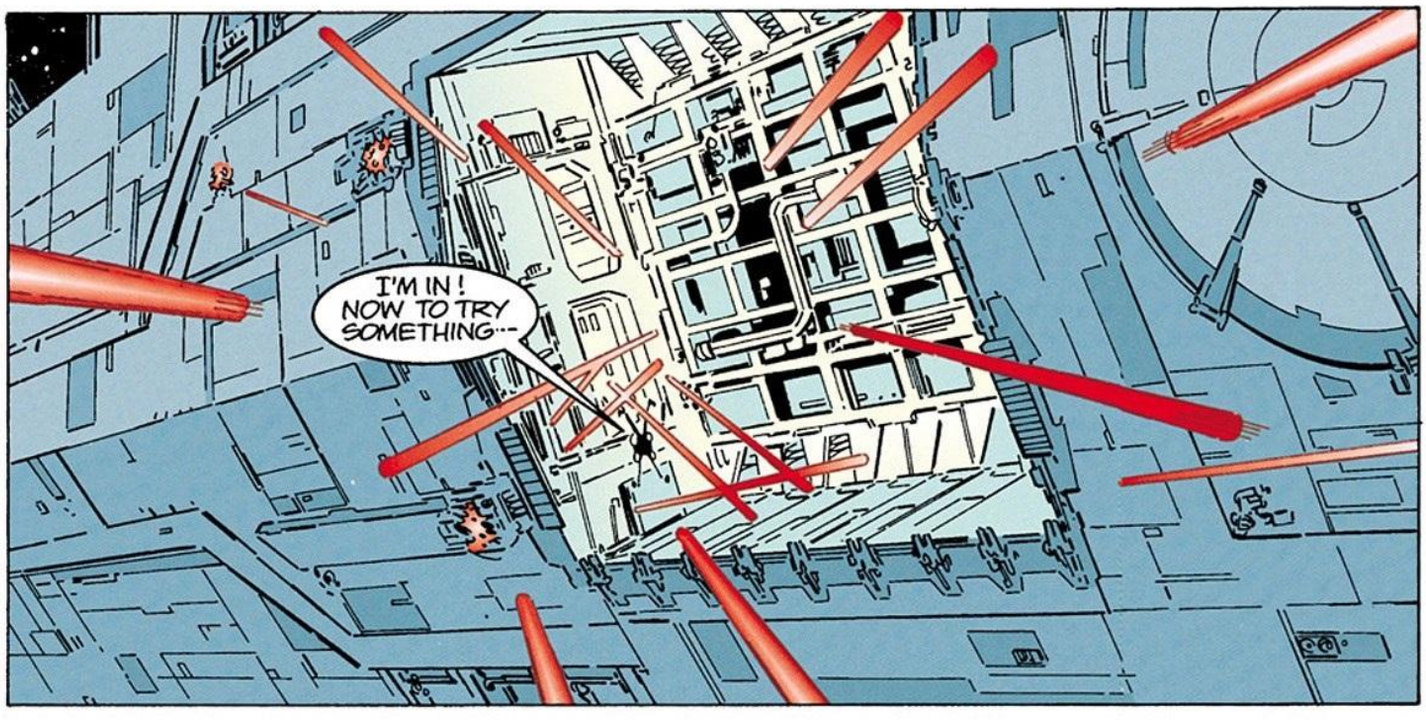

VROOP!
I'VE GOT TWO SQUINTS BREATHING DOWN MY NECK! I COULD USE SOME BACK-UP!
ON MY WAY, PLOURR!

PLOURR!


YOU STILL WITH US, PLOURR?!
YEAH...IF THE LANDING DOESN'T KILL ME!

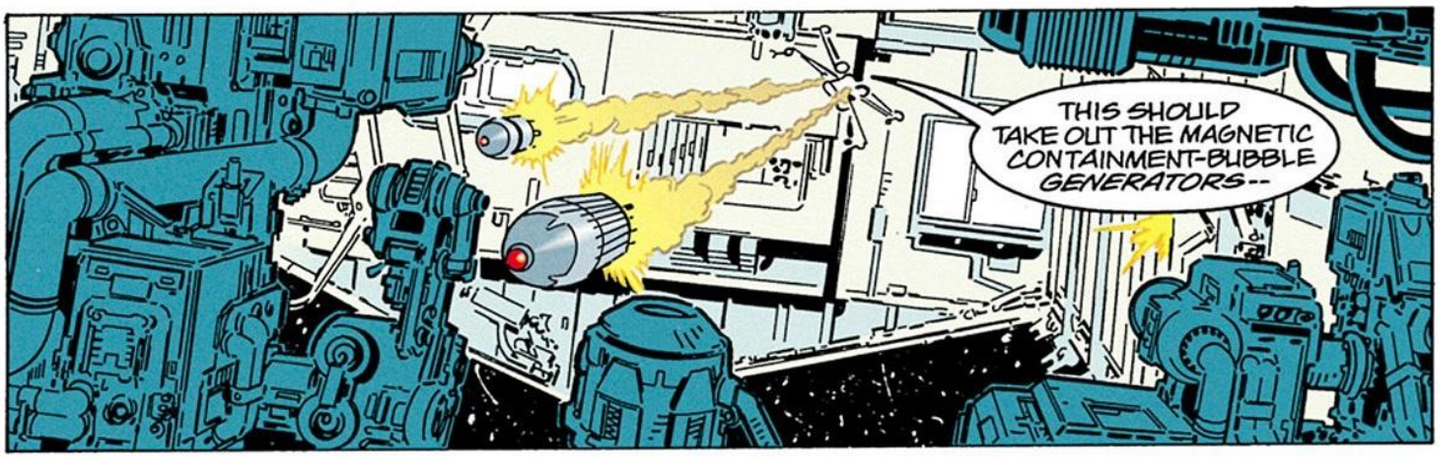
I'M GOING AFTER HER!
BE CAREFUL, KAPP!
GIVE IT UP, KAPP! THIS SHIP COULD BLOW AT ANY SECOND!
THEN QUIT DISTRACTING ME WITH A LOT OF CHATTER!
GET READY TO RUN!
MY ANKLE...!
LEAN ON ME! WE'RE ALMOST IN THE CLEAR!

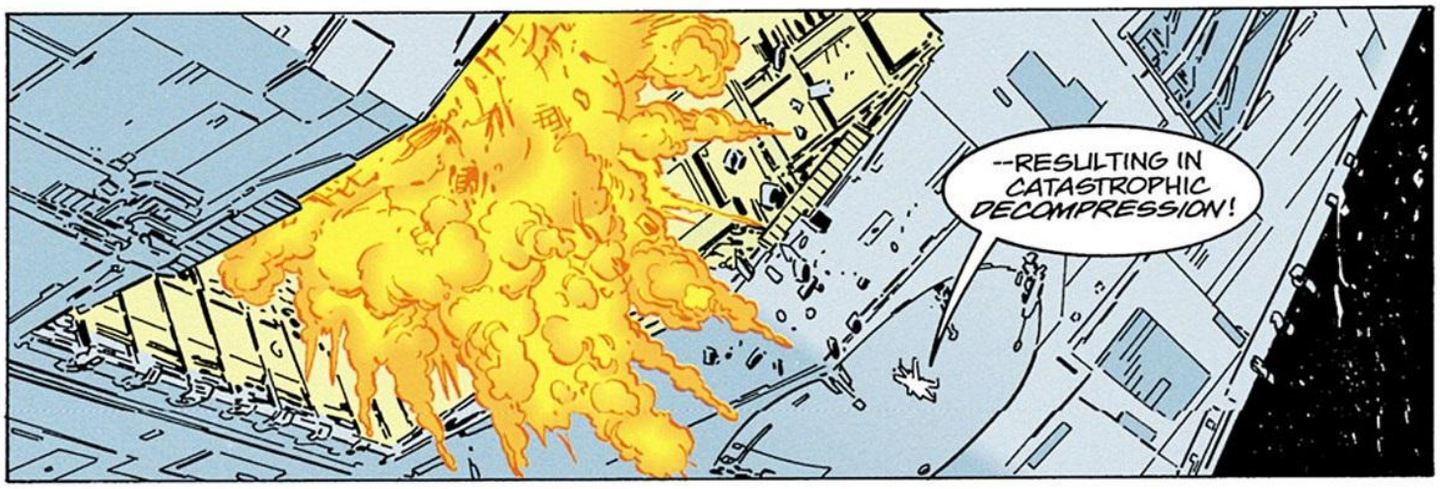

MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO SLIP INSIDE THE SHIELDS AT THE BELLY!

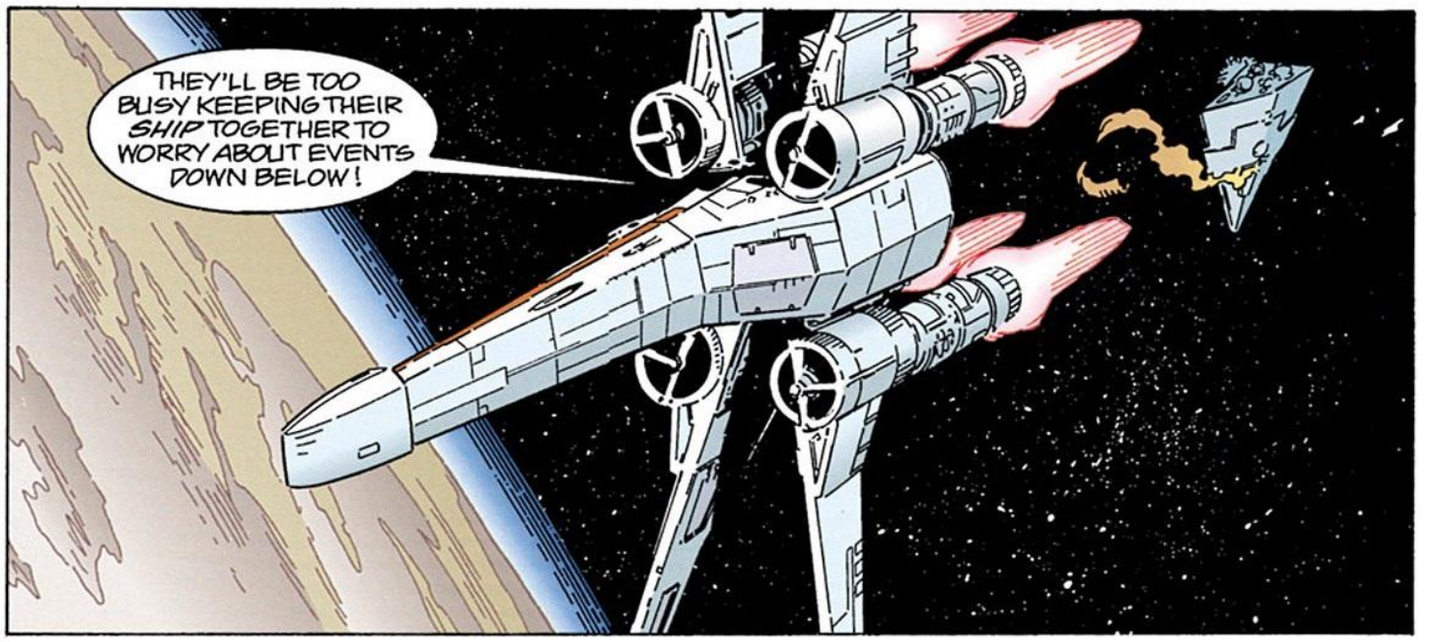

I'M IN! NOW TO TRY SOMETHING...

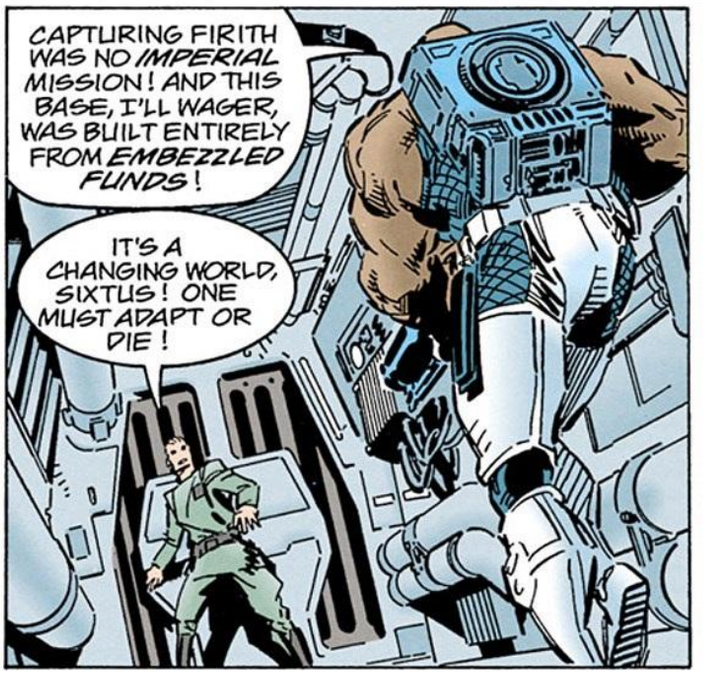
--I'VE WANTED TO DO FOR A LONG TIME!

CUT ENGINES...ENGAGE REPULSORLIFT DRIVES...

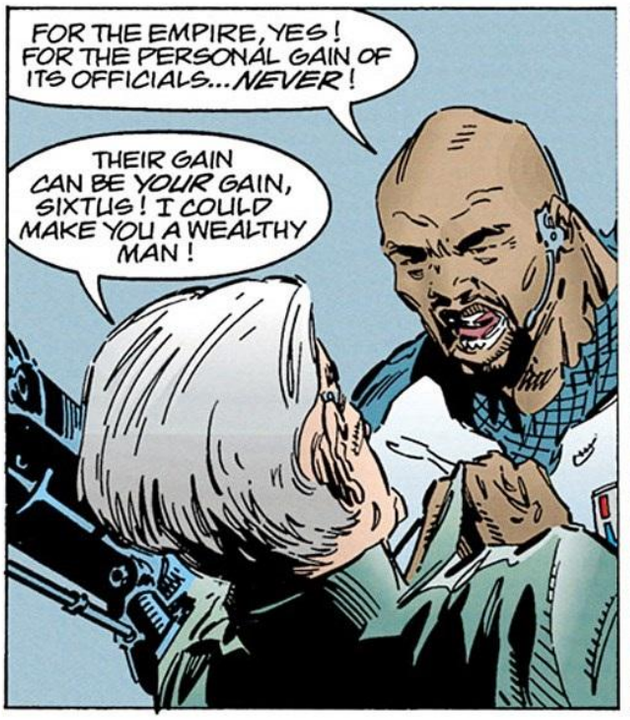

THIS SHOULD TAKE OUT THE MAGNETIC CONTAINMENT-BUBBLE GENERATORS--


--RESULTING IN CATASTROPHIC DECOMPRESSION!

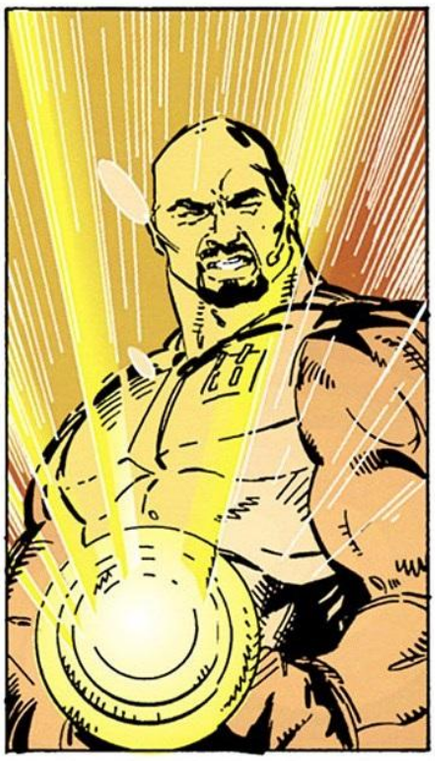

THEY'LL BE TOO BUSY KEEPING THEIR *SHIP* TOGETHER TO WORRY ABOUT EVENTS DOWN BELOW!


CAPTURING FIRITH WAS NO *IMPERIAL* MISSION! AND THIS BASE, I'LL WAGER, WAS BUILT ENTIRELY FROM *EMBEZZLED FUNDS*!
IT'S A CHANGING WORLD, SIXTUS! ONE MUST ADAPT OR DIE!

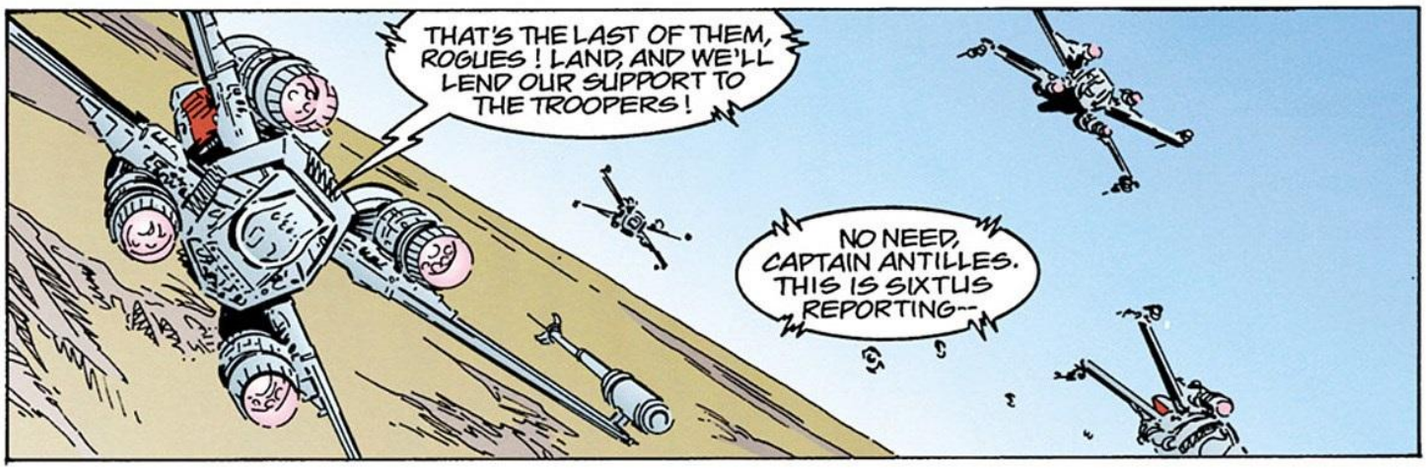
EVEN IF IT MEANS ABANDONING YOUR OWN MEN TO *SLAVERY*!?
I TOLD YOU THE MISSION WOULD INVOLVE SACRIFICES! YOU SHOULD BE WILLING TO GIVE UP YOUR VERY *LIFE* FOR YOUR EMPEROR!


FOR THE EMPIRE, YES! FOR THE PERSONAL GAIN OF ITS OFFICIALS... *NEVER*!
THEIR GAIN CAN BE *YOUR* GAIN, SIXTUS! I COULD MAKE YOU A WEALTHY MAN!

I CARE ONLY ABOUT *HONOR*, AND YOU, SEMTIN, HAVE *NONE*!

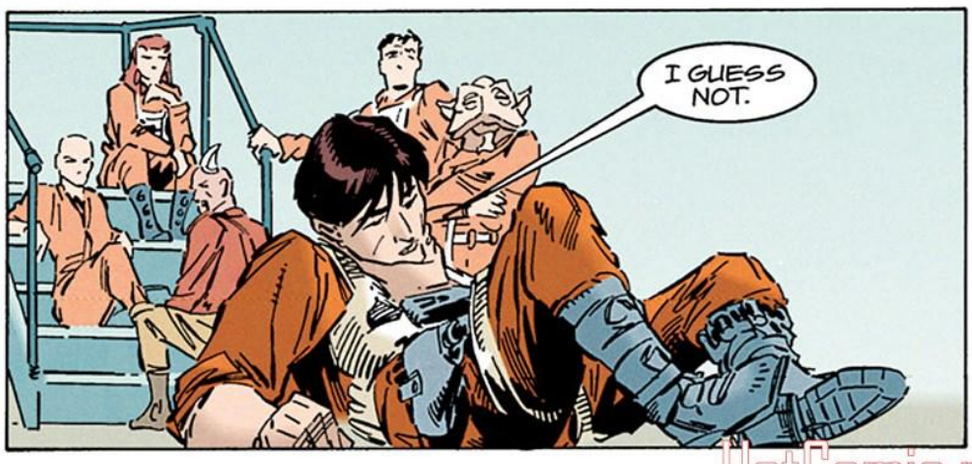


YOUR CAREER IS ENDED, CAPTAIN.


THAT'S THE LAST OF THEM, ROGUES! LAND, AND WE'LL LEND OUR SUPPORT TO THE TROOPERS!
NO NEED, CAPTAIN ANTILLES. THIS IS SIXTUS REPORTING--

--THE BASE IS SECURED.

WINTER, HERE. PLOURR'S ALL RIGHT... DAZED AND DIRTY, BUT INTACT.
THAT'S GOOD NEWS, WINTER! ALL ROGUES, RENDEZVOUS AT THE FREIGHTER!



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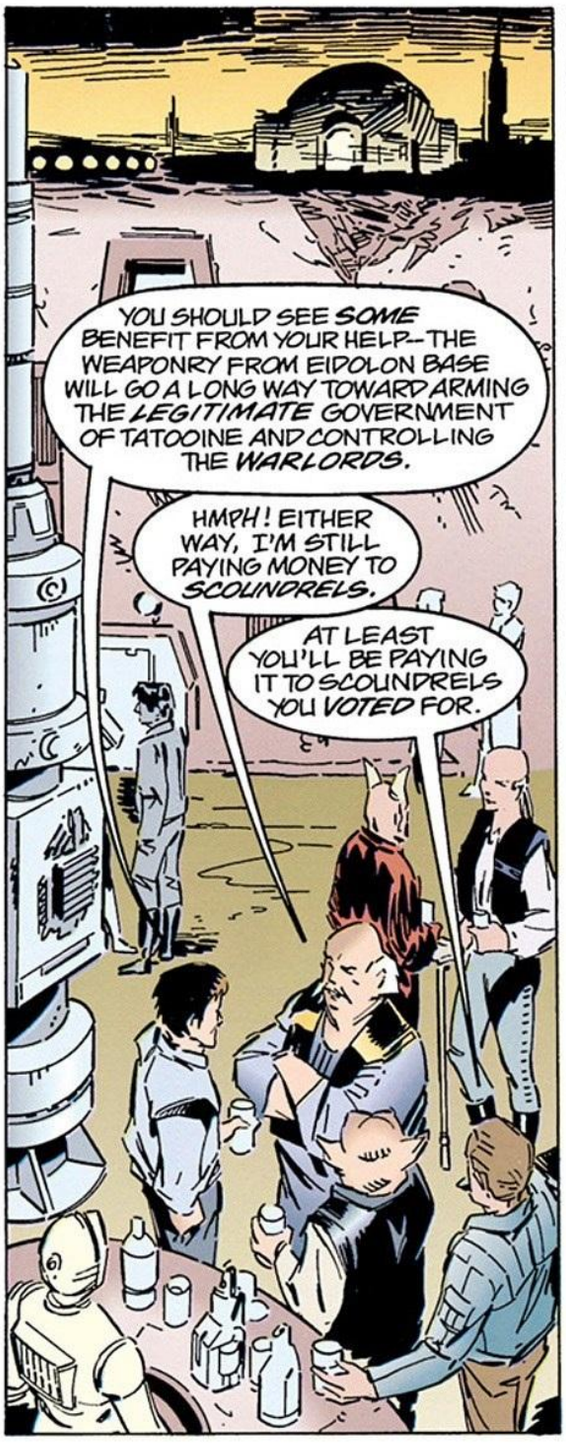
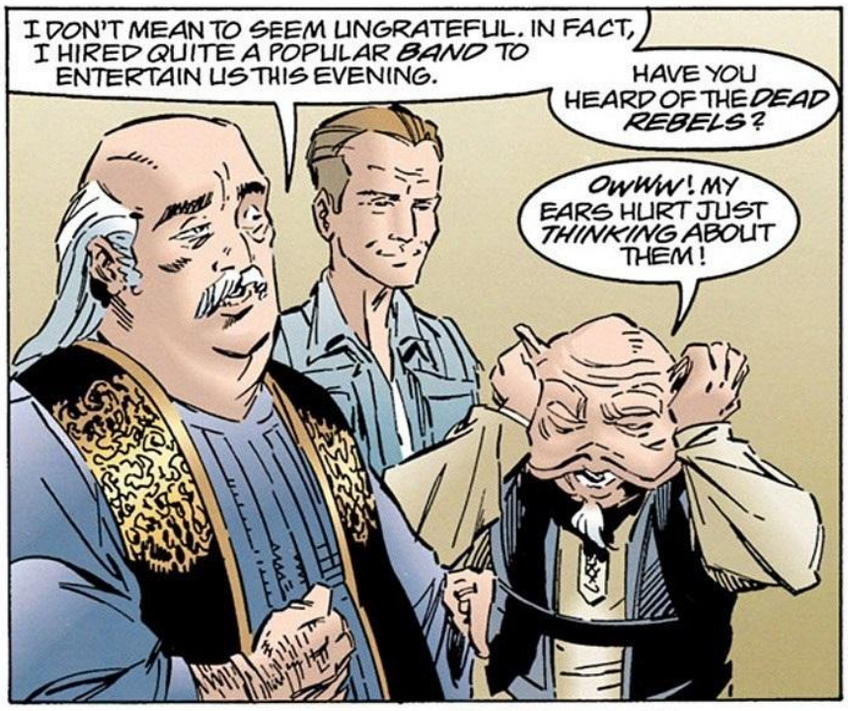
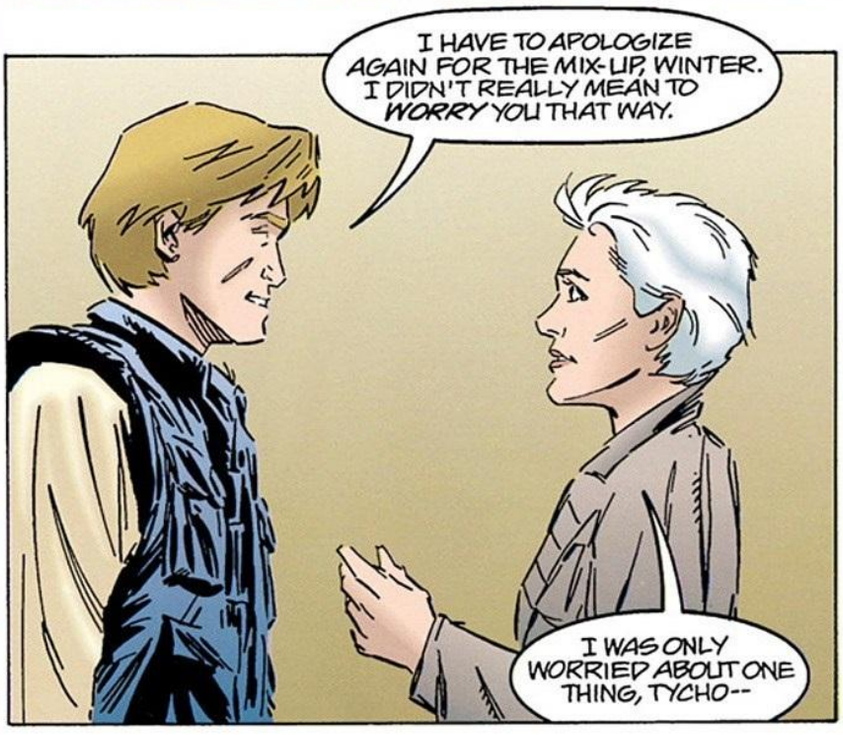
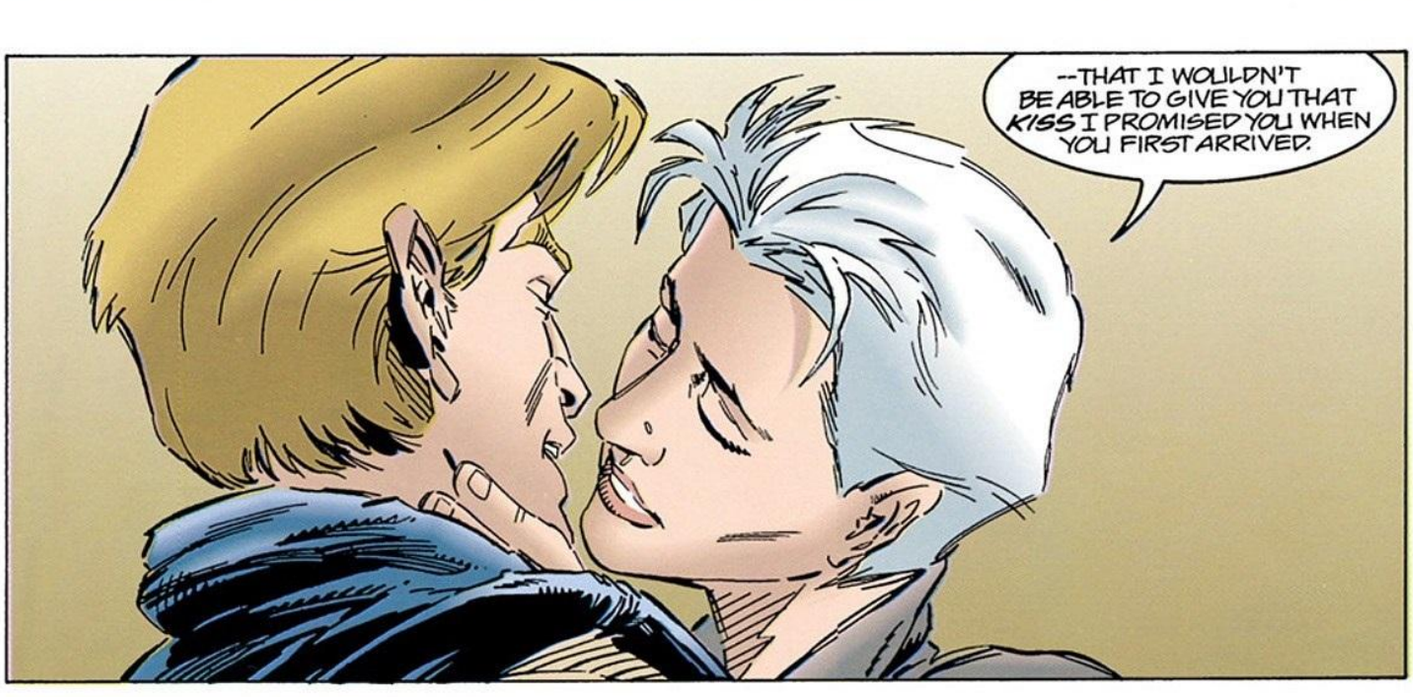
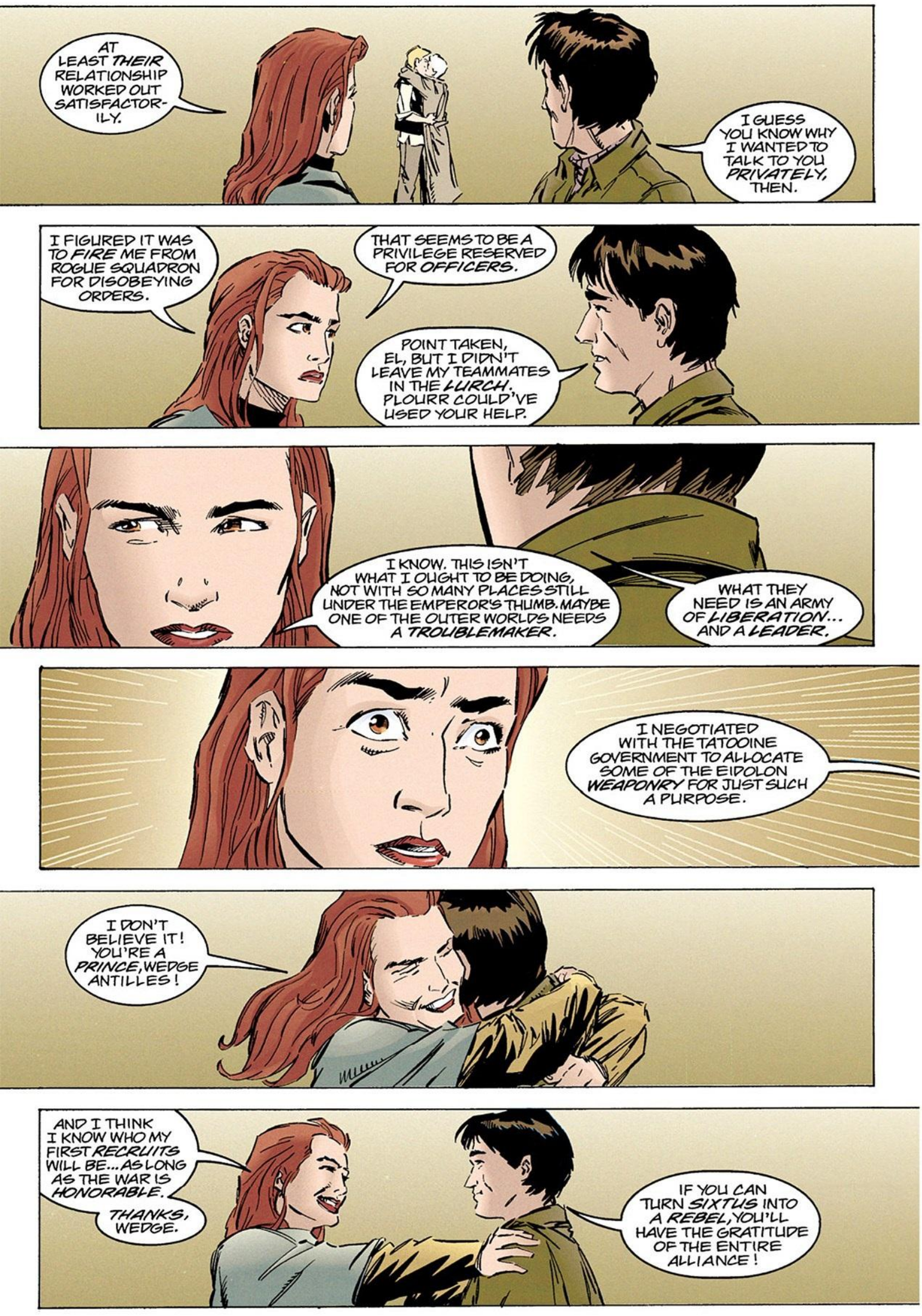
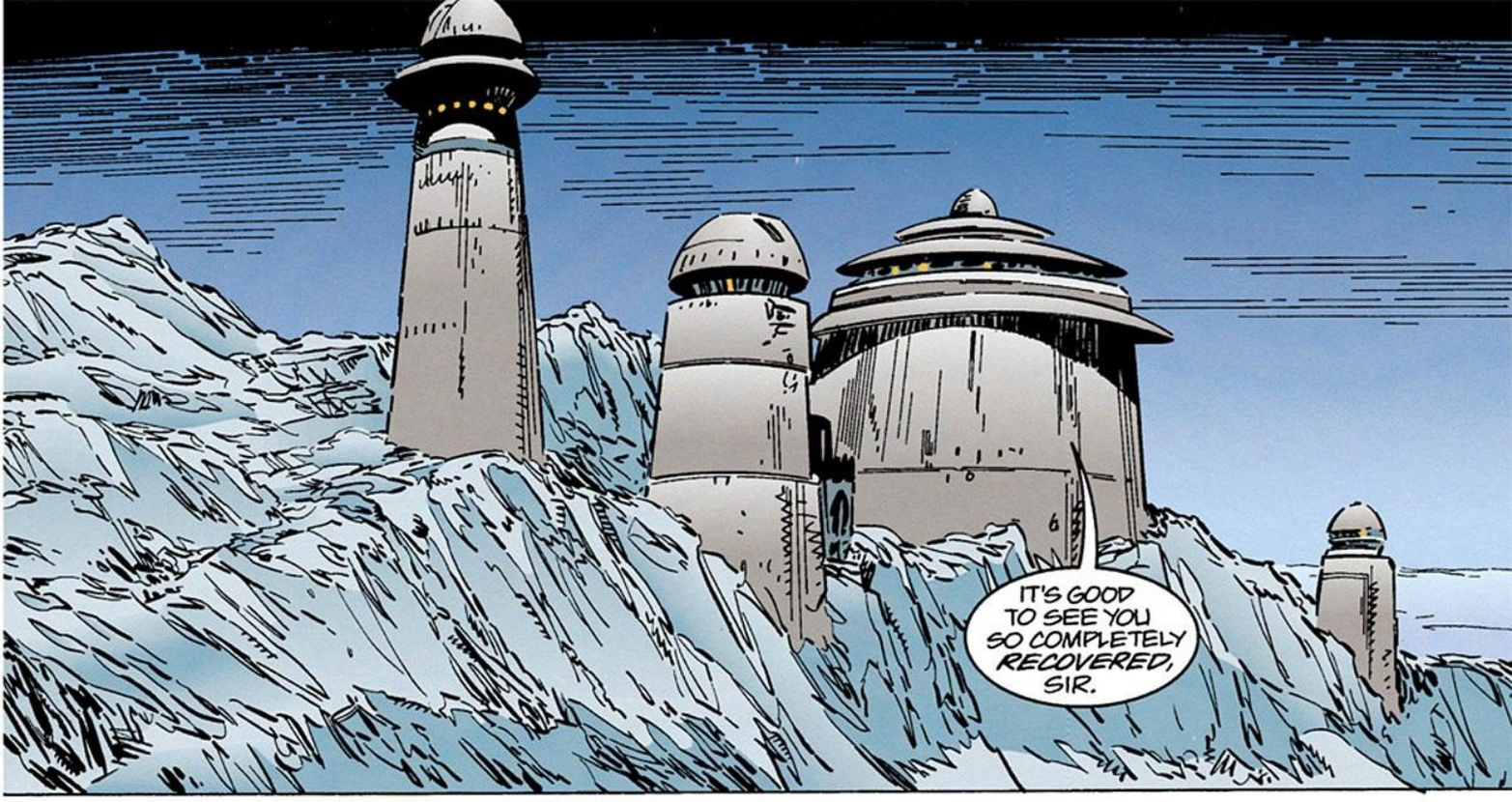

YOU SHOULD SEE SOME BENEFIT FROM YOUR HELP--THE WEAPONRY FROM EIDOLON BASE WILL GO A LONG WAY TOWARD ARMING THE LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT OF TATOOINE AND CONTROLLING THE WARLORDS.
HMPH! EITHER WAY, I'M STILL PAYING MONEY TO SCOUNDRELS.
AT LEAST YOU'LL BE PAYING IT TO SCOUNDRELS YOU VOTED FOR.


I DON'T MEAN TO SEEM UNGRATEFUL. IN FACT, I HIRED QUITE A POPULAR BAND TO ENTERTAIN US THIS EVENING.
HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE DEAD REBELS?
OWWW! MY EARS HURT JUST THINKING ABOUT THEM!


I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE AGAIN FOR THE MIX-UP, WINTER. I DIDN'T REALLY MEAN TO WORRY YOU THAT WAY.
I WAS ONLY WORRIED ABOUT ONE THING, TYCHO--

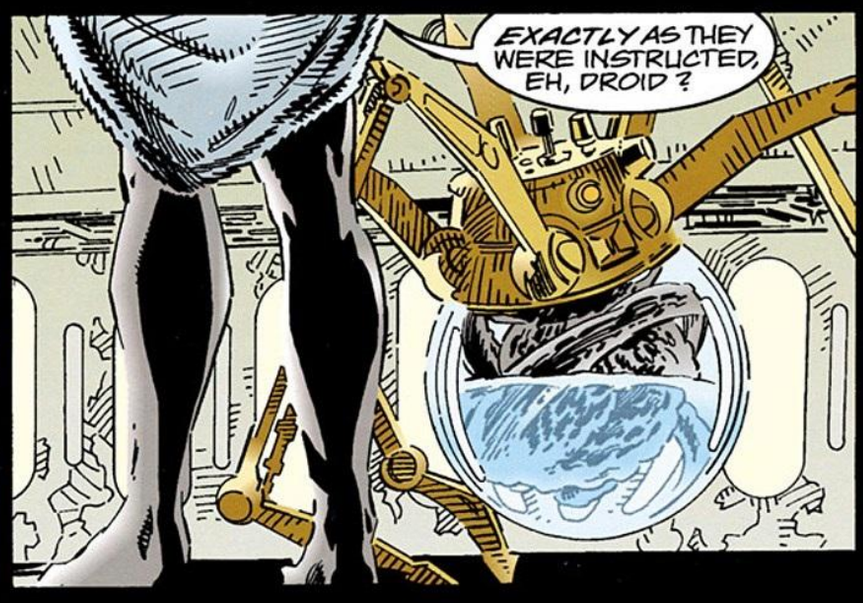

--THAT I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU THAT KISS I PROMISED YOU WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVED.

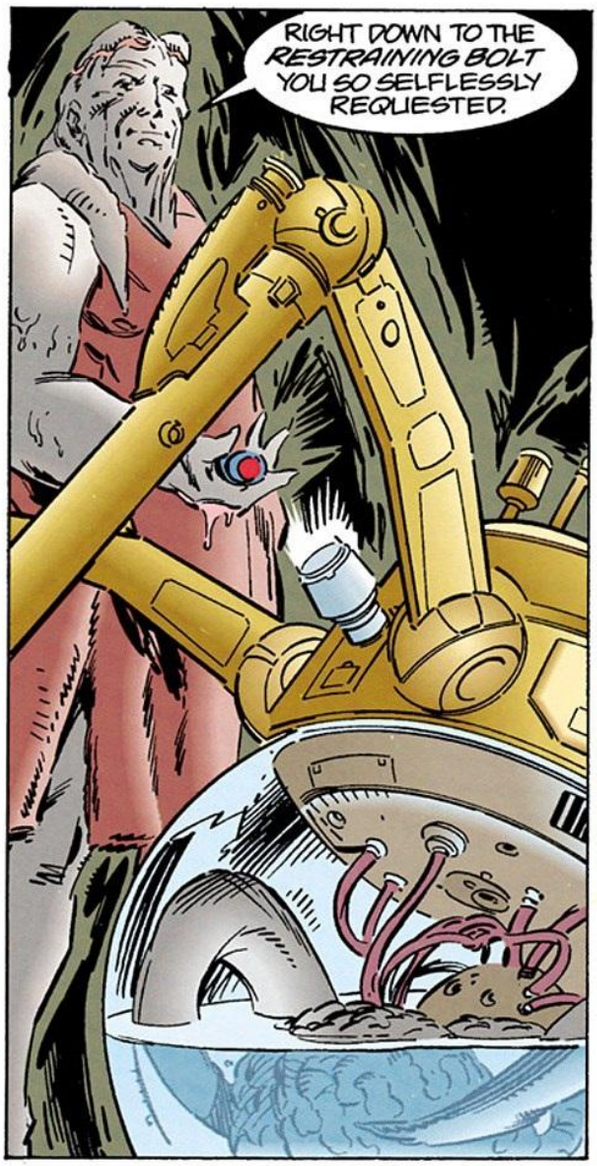

AT LEAST THEIR RELATIONSHIP WORKED OUT SATISFACTORILY.
I GUESS YOU KNOW WHY I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU PRIVATELY, THEN.
I FIGURED IT WAS TO FIRE ME FROM ROGUE SQUADRON FOR DISOBEYING ORDERS.
THAT SEEMS TO BE A PRIVILEGE RESERVED FOR OFFICERS.
POINT TAKEN, EL, BUT I DIDN'T LEAVE MY TEAMMATES IN THE LURCH. PLOURR COULD'VE USED YOUR HELP.
I KNOW. THIS ISN'T WHAT I OUGHT TO BE DOING, NOT WITH SO MANY PLACES STILL UNDER THE EMPEROR'S THUMB. MAYBE ONE OF THE OUTER WORLDS NEEDS A TROUBLEMAKER.
WHAT THEY NEED IS AN ARMY OF LIBERATION... AND A LEADER.
I NEGOTIATED WITH THE TATOOINE GOVERNMENT TO ALLOCATE SOME OF THE EIDOLON WEAPONRY FOR JUST SUCH A PURPOSE.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! YOU'RE A PRINCE, WEDGE ANTILLES!
AND I THINK I KNOW WHO MY FIRST RECRUITS WILL BE... AS LONG AS THE WAR IS HONORABLE.
THANKS, WEDGE.
IF YOU CAN TURN SIXTUS INTO A REBEL, YOU'LL HAVE THE GRATITUDE OF THE ENTIRE ALLIANCE!

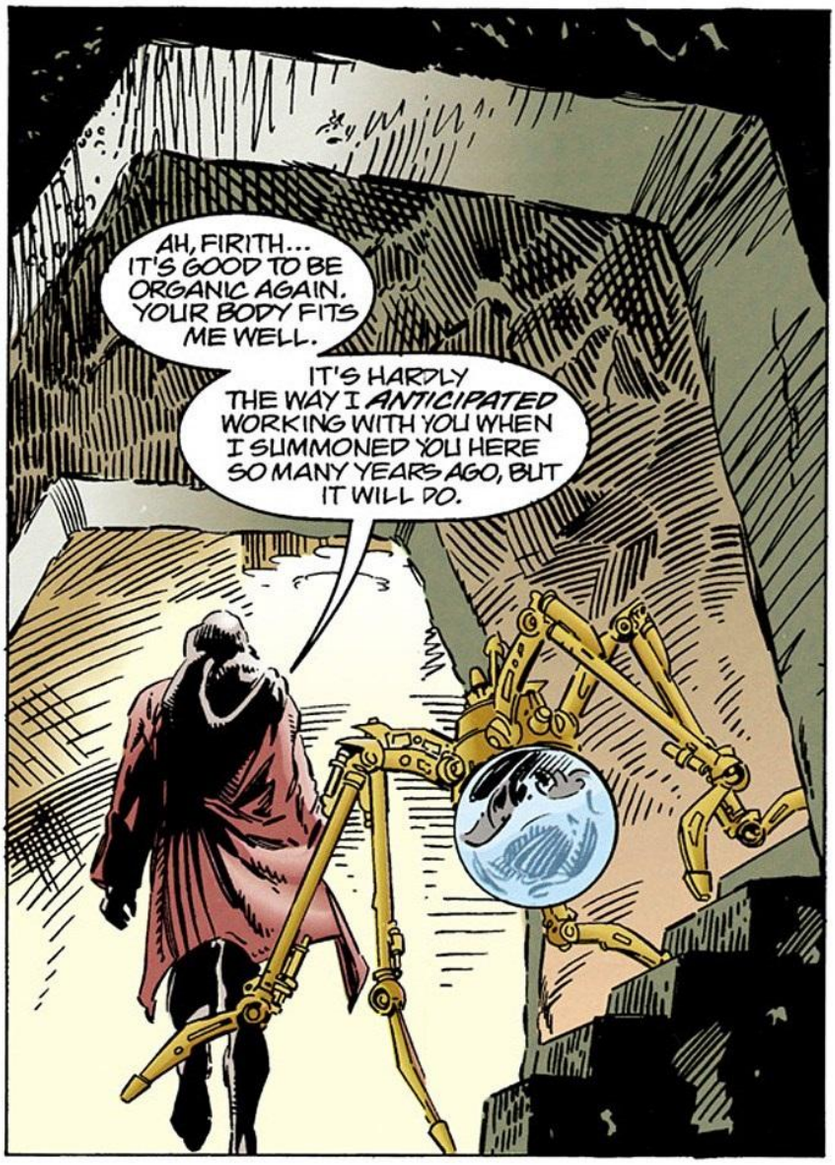

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU SO COMPLETELY RECOVERED, SIR.

YOU WERE IN SHOCK WHEN YOU ARRIVED. IF THE SPIDER-DROID HADN'T COMPELLED THE MONKS TO ATTEND TO YOU IMMEDIATELY, I DOUBT YOU WOULD HAVE PULLED THROUGH.
YES, I OWE MUCH TO THAT DROID.

THESE SCARS, HOWEVER, ARE MOST PUZZLING. THEY ARE MORE COMMONLY THE RESULT OF A BRAIN TRANSFER THAN THE KIND OF WOUND YOU SUFFERED.
I'M SURE THE MONKS DID ONLY AS THEY WERE INSTRUCTED.


EXACTLY AS THEY WERE INSTRUCTED, EH, DROID?





AS LONG AS ONE HAS HIS HEALTH, THERE'S NO TELLING *WHAT* HE MAY ACHIEVE, EH?

SOON THE NAME OF *BIB FORTUNA* SHALL ONCE AGAIN RING PROUDLY THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY! OH, GLORIOUS DAY!

OH, GLORIOUS, GLORIOUS, DAY!

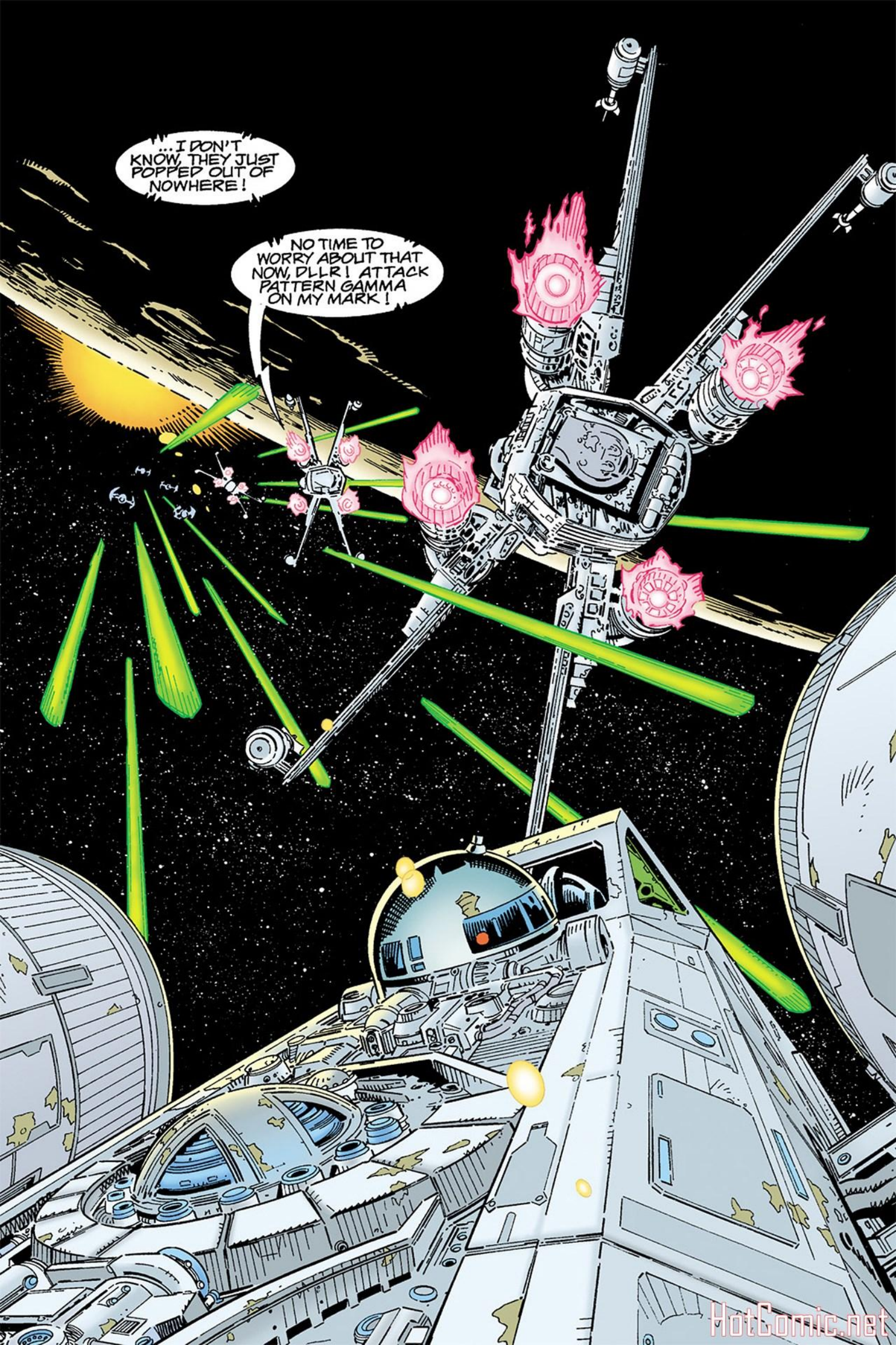
THE END

The Warrior Princess | illustration by Mark Harrison

HotComic.net

Approximately seven months after the Battle of Endor . . .

story by Michael A. Stackpole
script by Scott Tolson
pencils by John Nadeau
inks by Jordi Ensign
colors by Dave Nestelle
letters by Vickie Williams



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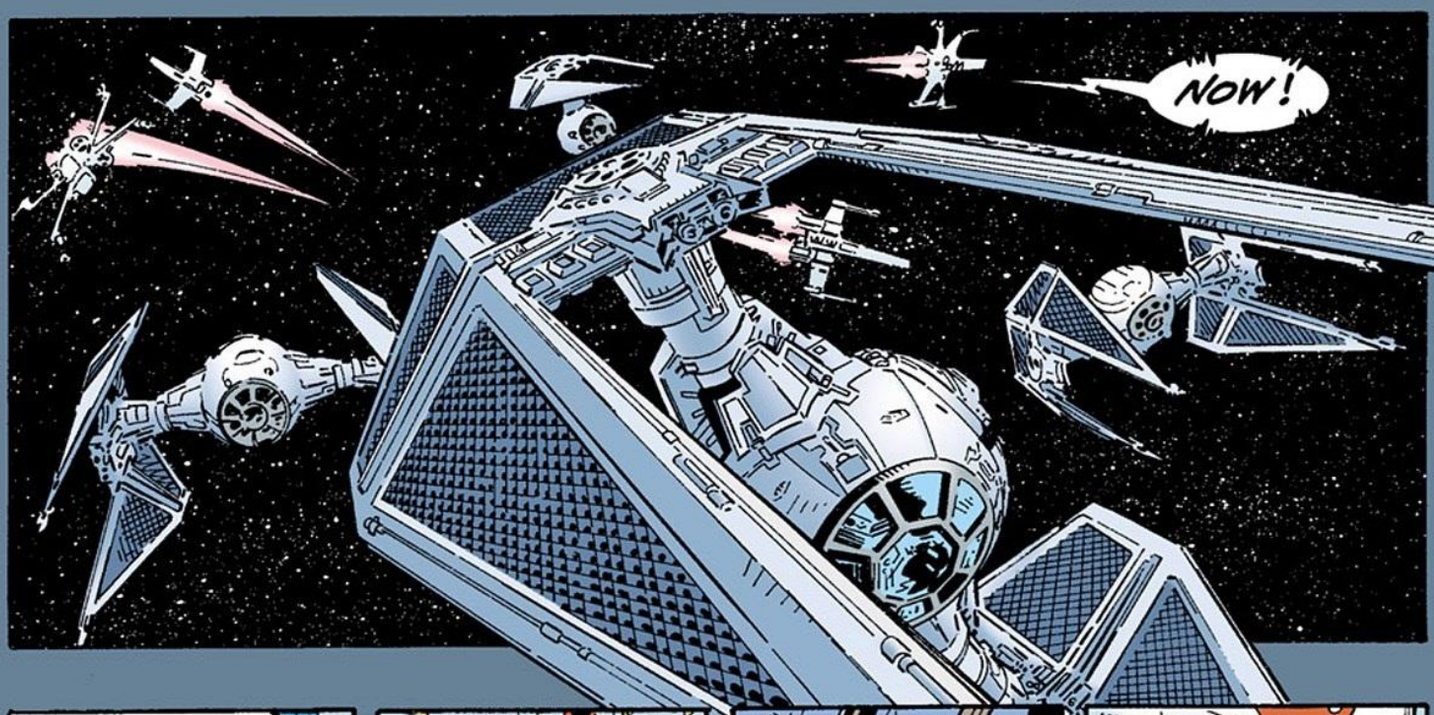
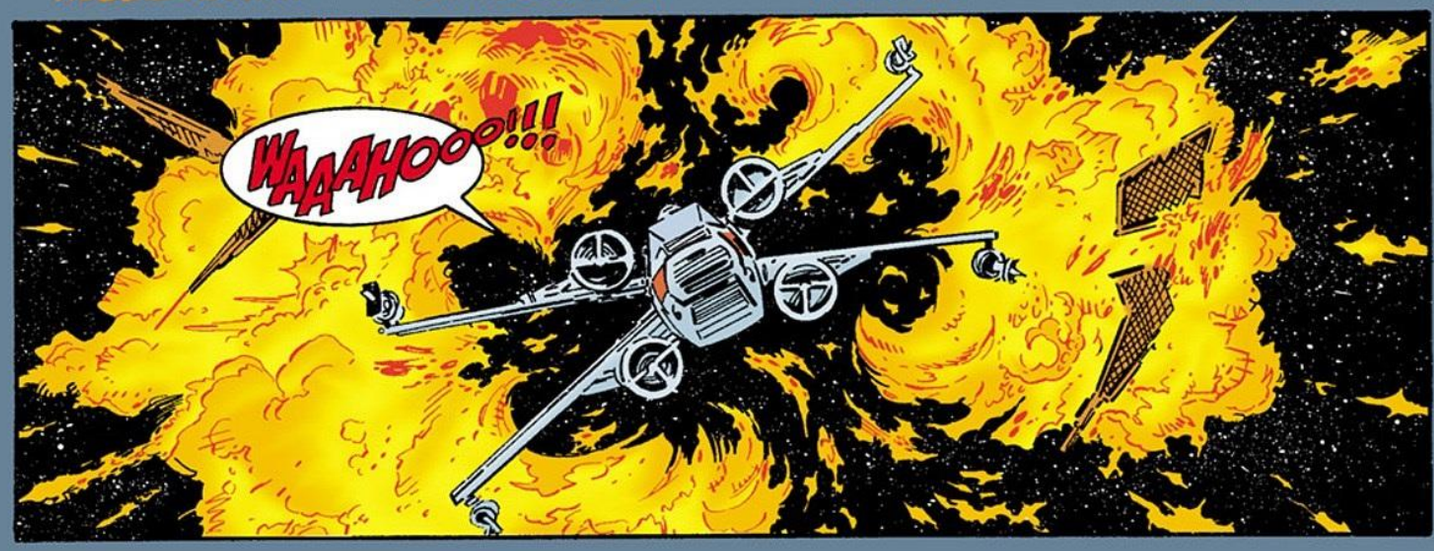


HOBBIE KLIVAN

LT. WES JANSON

DLLR NEP

PLOURR ILO

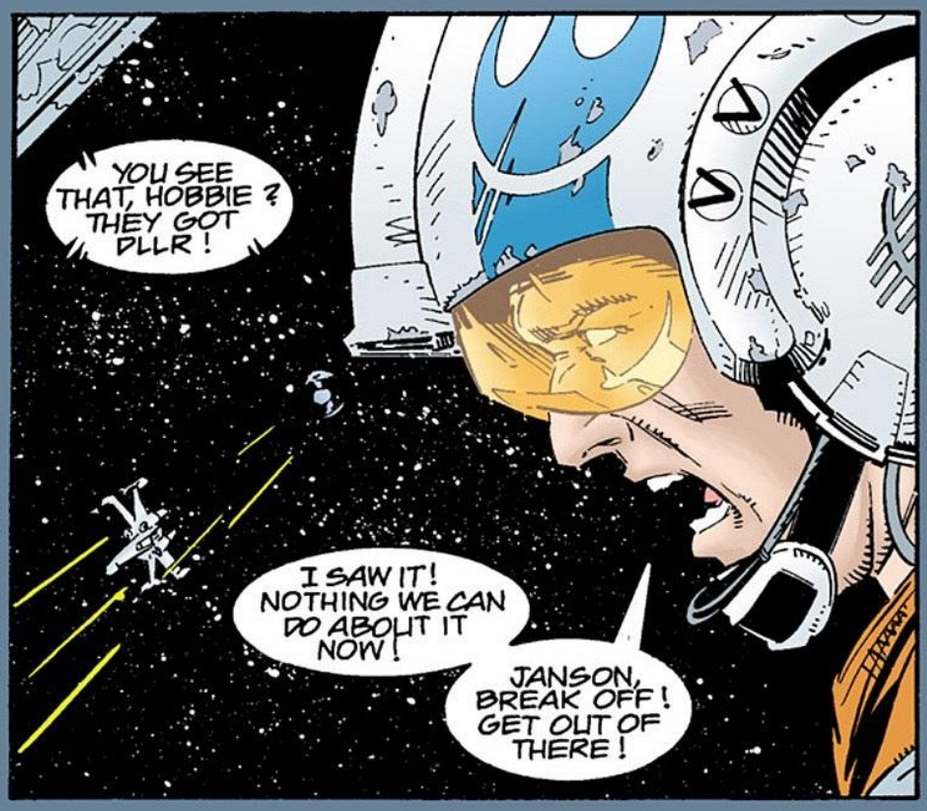


WATCH IT, DLLR! YOU'VE GOT A SQUINT ON YOUR TAIL!
I KNOW, I KNOW! I CAN'T SHAKE HIM!

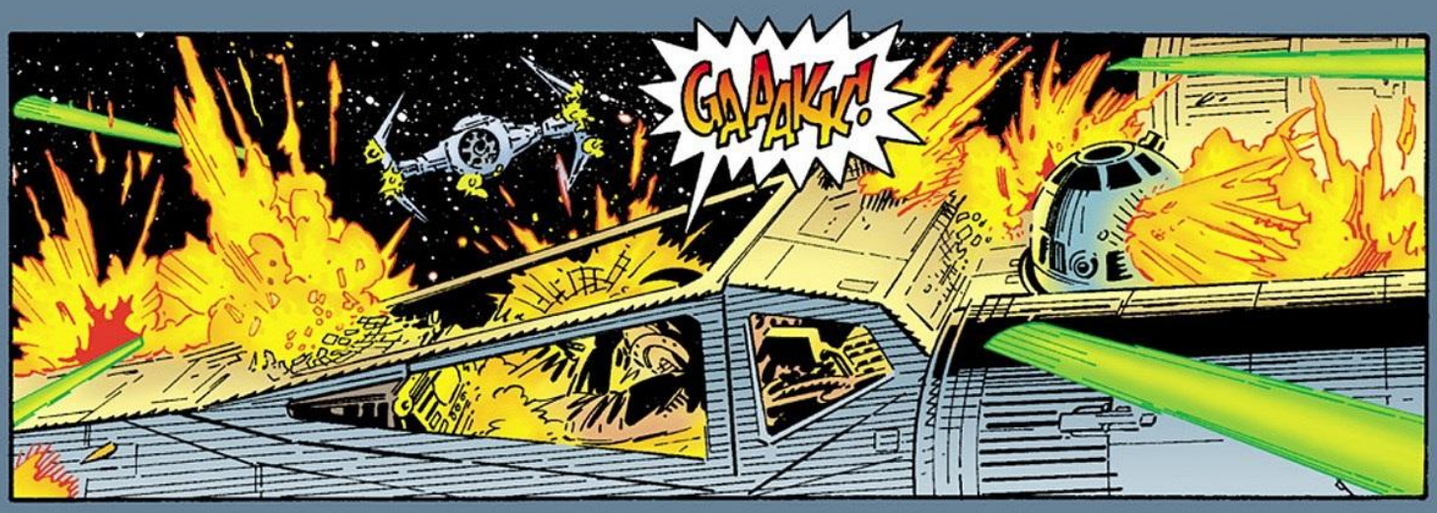
HE'S ALL OVER ME! MY R2 UNIT'S HIT! STABILIZER'S BUCKLING!
SCISSOR RIGHT, DLLR, I'LL GET HIM OFF YA!

SCISSOR RIGHT DLLR! SCISSOR RIGHT!

DLLR!
AAAGGHHH--


YOU SEE THAT, HOBBIE ? THEY GOT DLLR !
I SAW IT! NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT NOW !
JANSON, BREAK OFF ! GET OUT OF THERE !

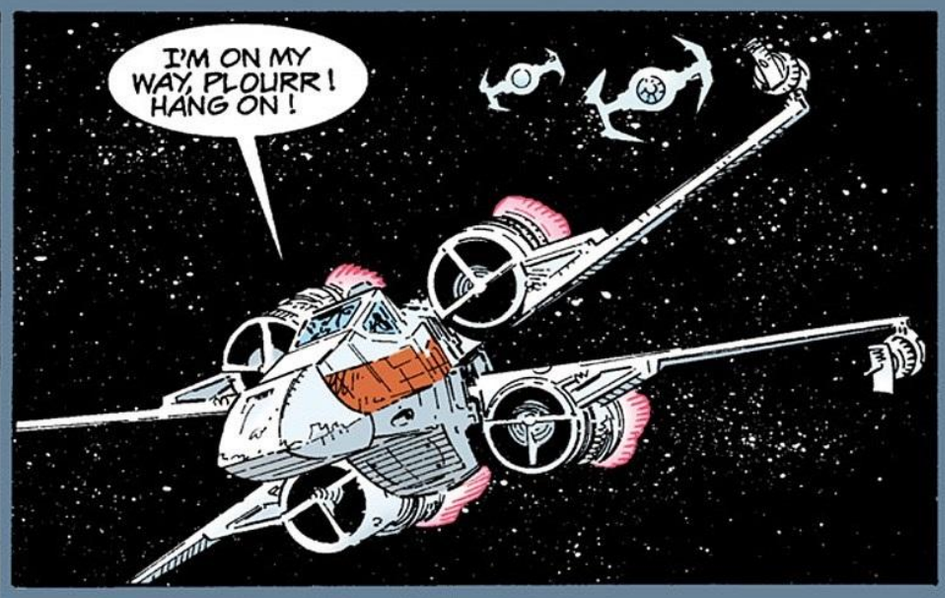
JANSON, DO YOU COPY ? BREAK OFF ! YOU HAVE TWO EYES ON YA !
TIME FOR SOME PAYBACK, HOBBIE ! THIS ONE'S FOR...

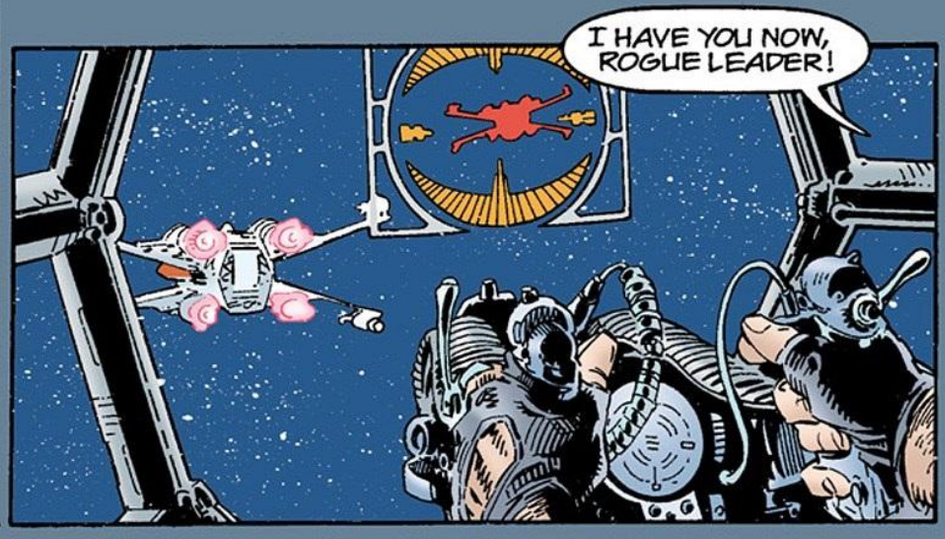

GAAAKK!

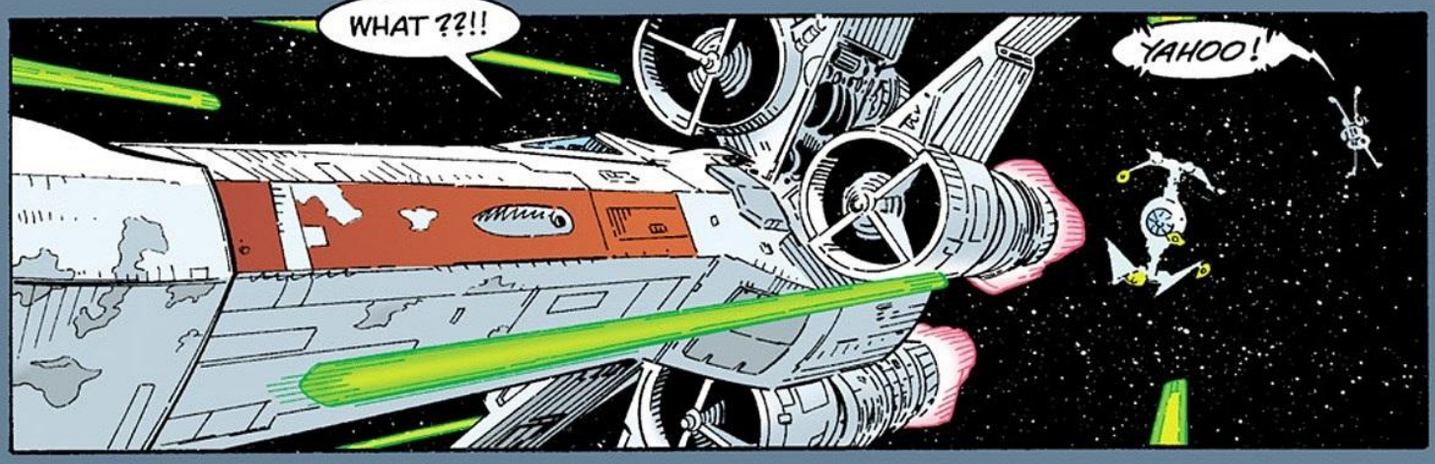
WES!!

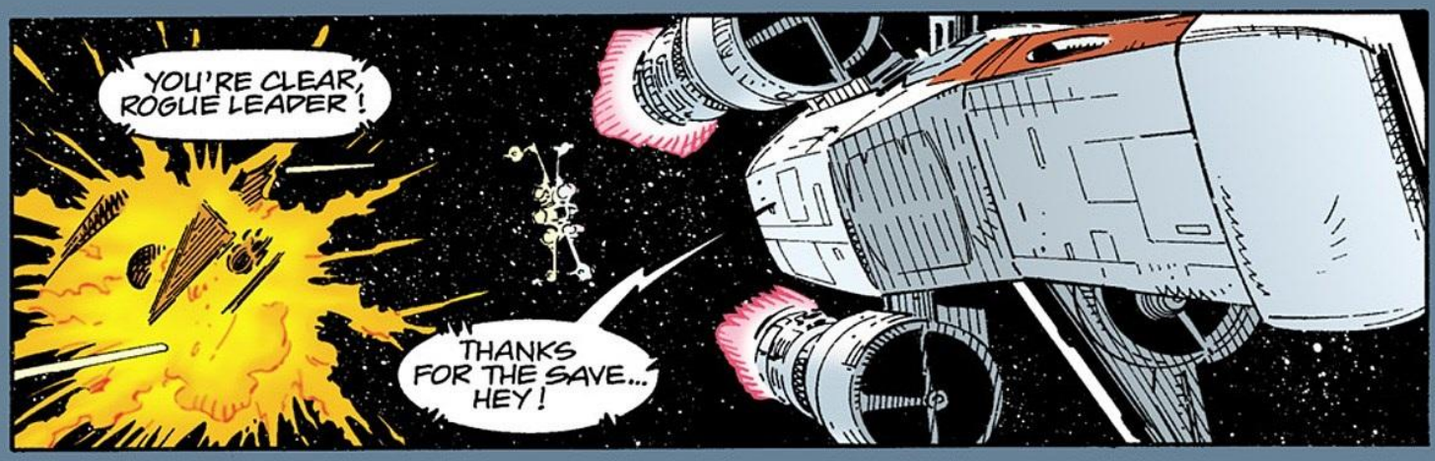
ROGUE LEADER, I'VE LOST MY REAR DEFLECTOR ! I--

I'M HIT!!!


I'M ON MY WAY, PLOURR! HANG ON!

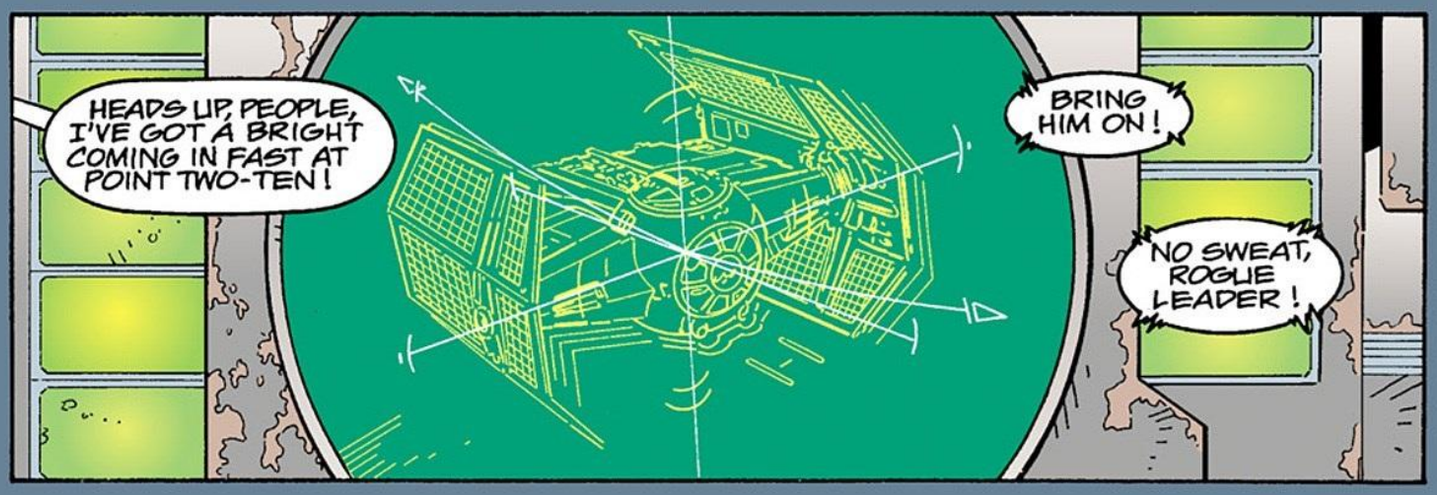

I HAVE YOU NOW, ROGUE LEADER!


WHAT ??!!
YAHOO!


YOU'RE CLEAR, ROGUE LEADER!
THANKS FOR THE SAVE... HEY!

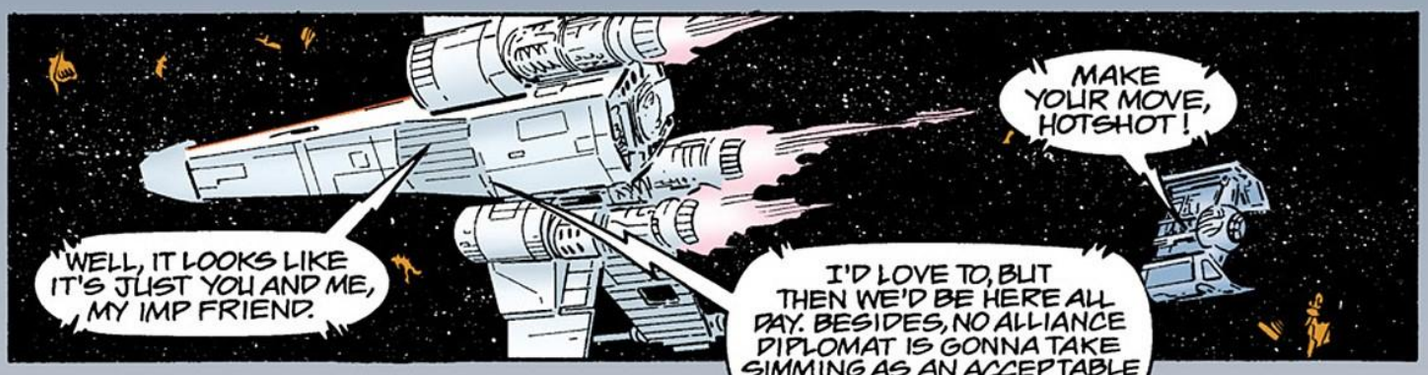
...IS THAT YOU, TYCHO ?
COPY THAT, ROGUE LEADER ! THAT'S ONE YOU OWE ME !
AND AS FOR YOU, PLOURR...

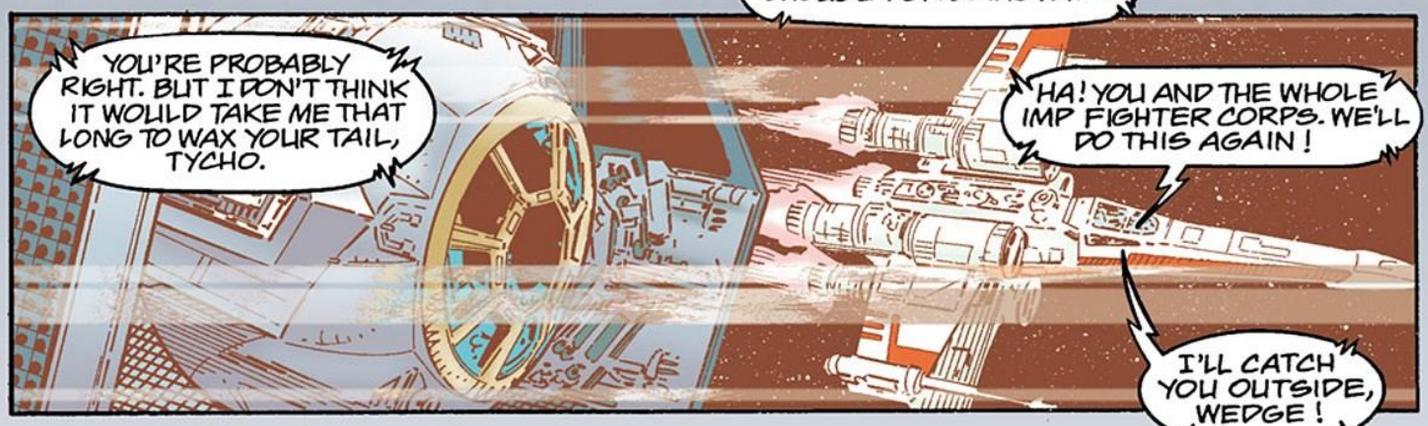
...YOU BUY THE FIRST ROUND AT THE CANTINA !
YOU GOT IT !


HEADS UP, PEOPLE, I'VE GOT A BRIGHT COMING IN FAST AT POINT TWO-TEN !
BRING HIM ON !
NO SWEAT, ROGUE LEADER !

HE'S ON ME TIGHT !!! HE--

...





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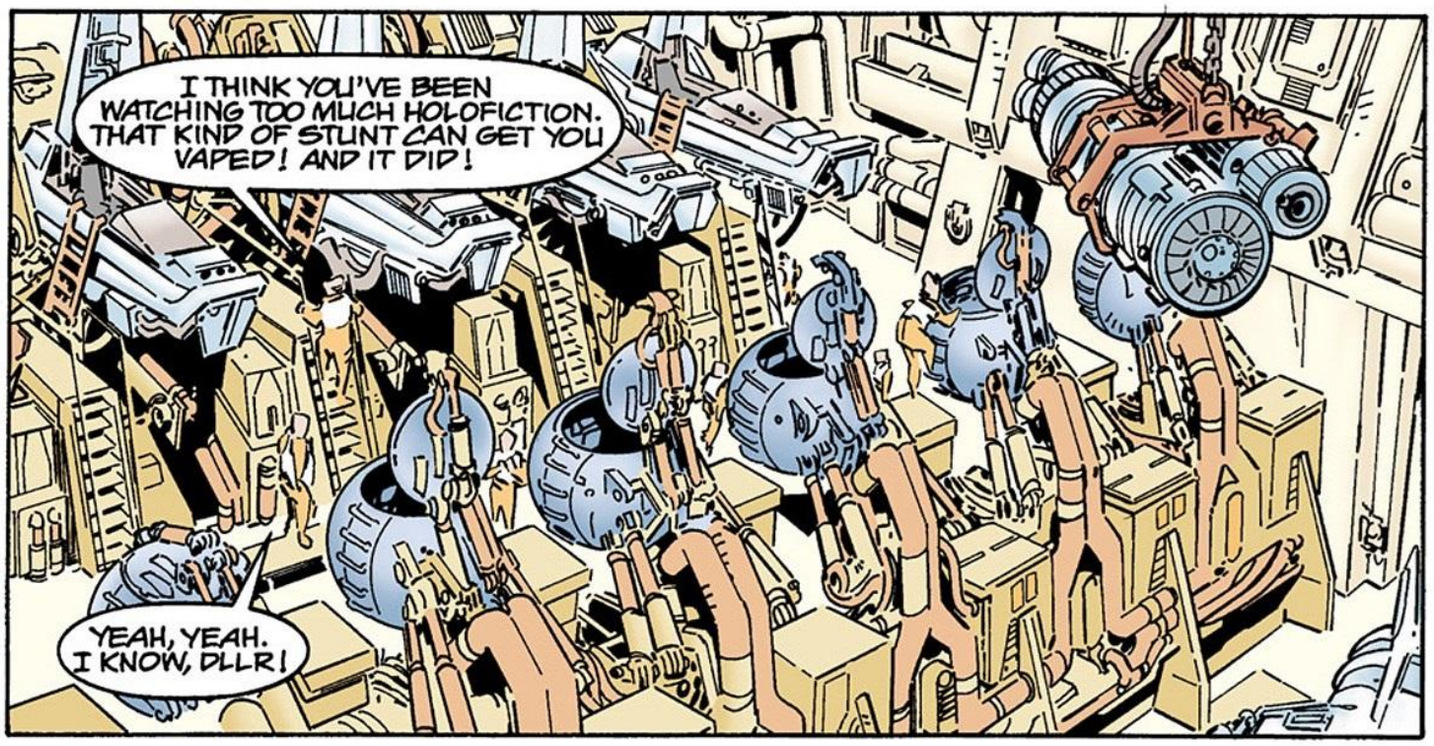
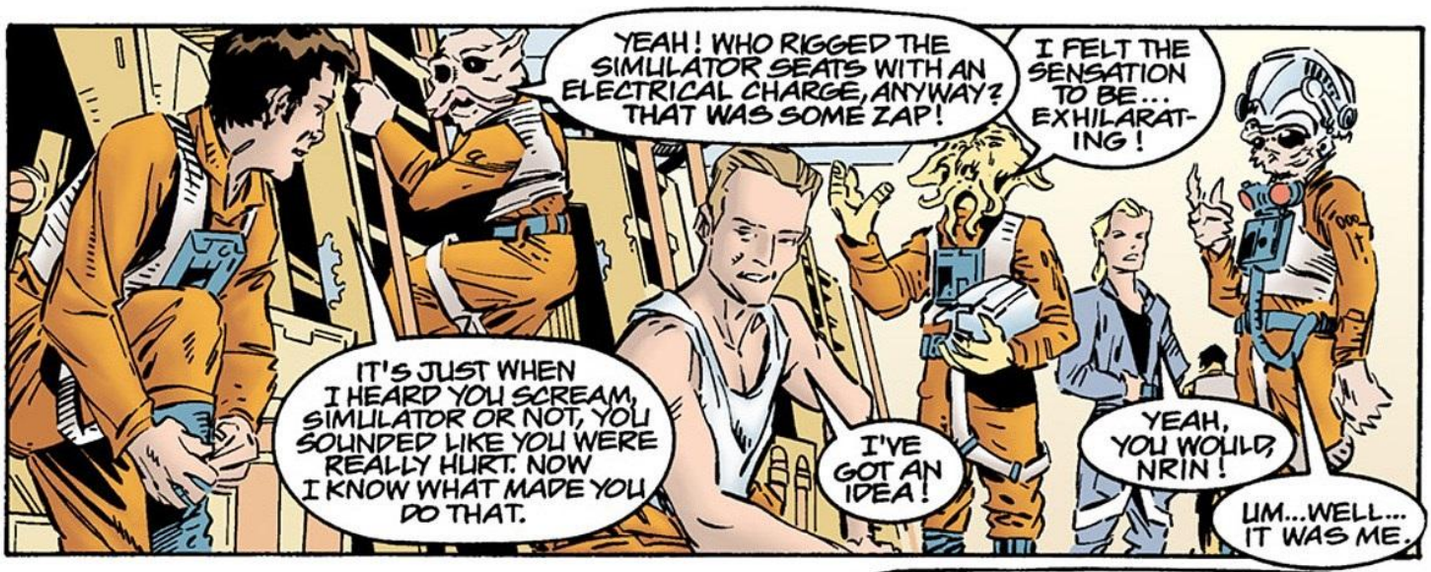
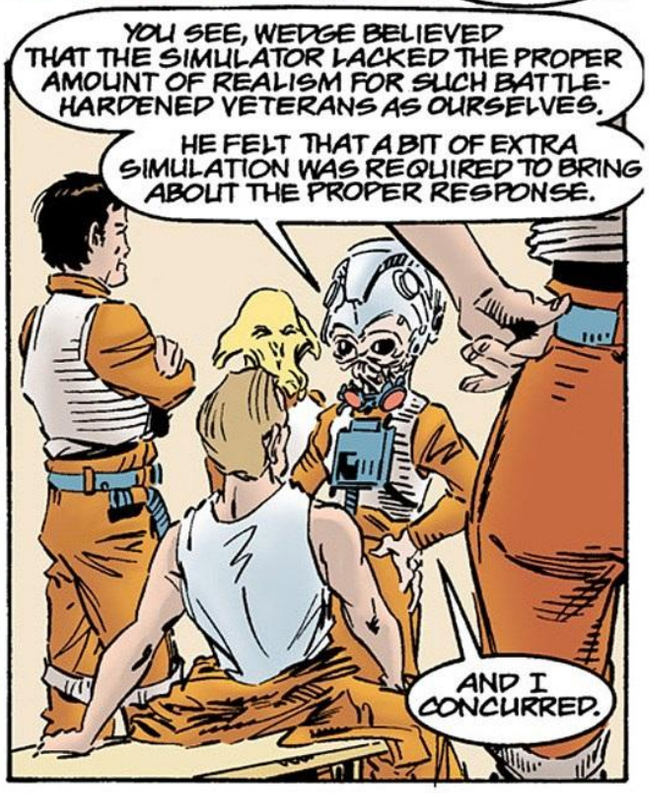

I THINK YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING TOO MUCH HOLOFICTION. THAT KIND OF STUNT CAN GET YOU VAPED! AND IT DID!
YEAH, YEAH. I KNOW, DLLR!


YEAH! WHO RIGGED THE SIMULATOR SEATS WITH AN ELECTRICAL CHARGE, ANYWAY? THAT WAS SOME ZAP!
I FELT THE SENSATION TO BE... EXHILARATING!
IT'S JUST WHEN I HEARD YOU SCREAM, SIMULATOR OR NOT, YOU SOUNDED LIKE YOU WERE REALLY HURT. NOW I KNOW WHAT MADE YOU DO THAT.
I'VE GOT AN IDEA!
YEAH, YOU WOULD, NRIN!
UM...WELL... IT WAS ME.

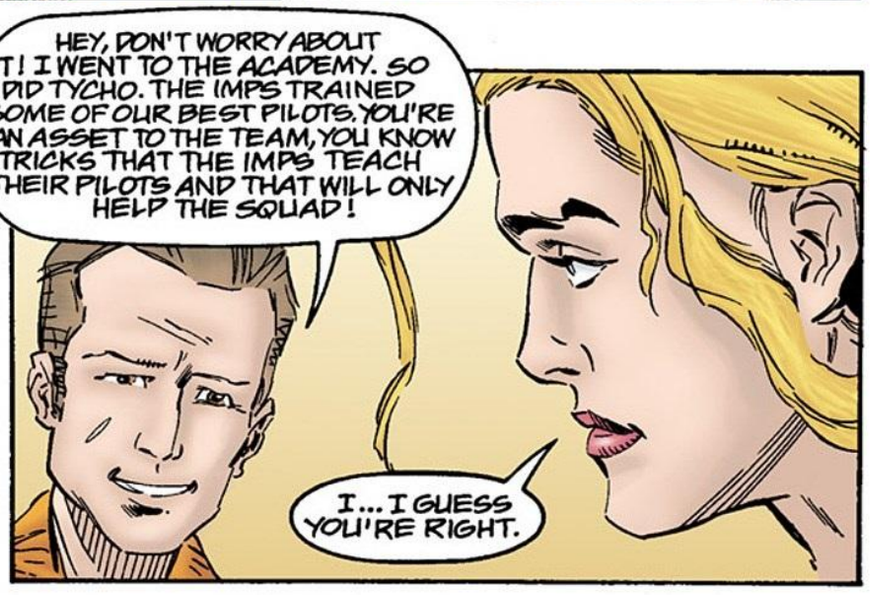
ACTING ON WEDGE'S ORDERS, OF COURSE.
YOU!!??
HA! I KNEW IT!


YOU SEE, WEDGE BELIEVED THAT THE SIMULATOR LACKED THE PROPER AMOUNT OF REALISM FOR SUCH BATTLE-HARDENED VETERANS AS OURSELVES.
HE FELT THAT A BIT OF EXTRA SIMULATION WAS REQUIRED TO BRING ABOUT THE PROPER RESPONSE.
AND I CONCURRED.

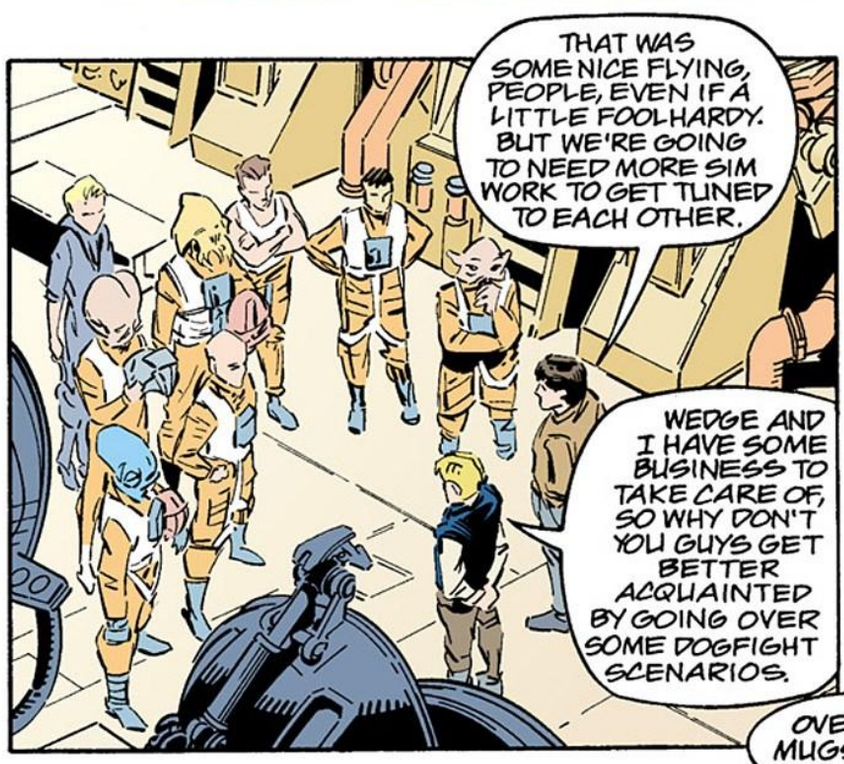
I FELT THE OUTBURST BY LT. JANSON WAS A TEXTBOOK CASE OF WHAT THE PSYCHE TECHS CALL "BATTLE FEVER". IT WAS QUITE INTERESTING.
"QUITE INTERESTING", SHE SAYS! JUST HOW MUCH JUICE DID YOU USE IN THOSE CHARGES, ANYWAY?
EACH CHARGE WAS BASED ON THE PILOT'S INDIVIDUAL COMBAT STRESS RESPONSE. I JUST HOOKED THE CHARGE TO THE BIO-OUTPUT MOTIVATOR.

YOU KNOW YOU HAD ME COLD RIGHT BEFORE TYCHO CAME IN. I COULDN'T SHAKE YOU. AND AFTER THE WAY YOU TOOK OUT JANSON...
I GUESS I GOT A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY.
NO, NOT AT ALL! THAT'S WHAT COMBAT SIMULATIONS ARE FOR. I WAS JUST WONDERING IF YOU'VE HAD SOME BACKGROUND WITH THE EYEBALL?
UH... YEAH. A LITTLE.

I... UH... WAS A MEMBER OF THE COMMENOR MILITIA. THEY USED THE 'EYEBALL' EXCLUSIVELY FOR TRAINING... IN PREPARATION FOR ENTRANCE TO THE IMPERIAL NAVAL ACADEMY.
BUT I NEVER ATTENDED THE ACADEMY! I HATE THE EMPIRE! I--


HEY, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT! I WENT TO THE ACADEMY. SO DID TYCHO. THE IMPS TRAINED SOME OF OUR BEST PILOTS. YOU'RE AN ASSET TO THE TEAM, YOU KNOW TRICKS THAT THE IMPS TEACH THEIR PILOTS AND THAT WILL ONLY HELP THE SQUAD!
I... I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, IBTISAM! THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU WAS ON HOME ONE JUST BEFORE ENDOR.
PLOURR, IT IS PLEASING TO SEE YOU AGAIN!



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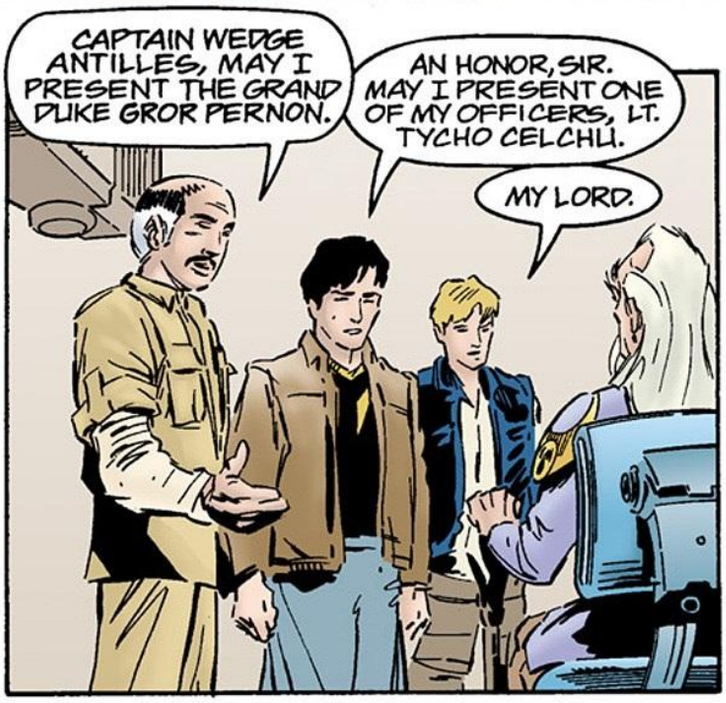
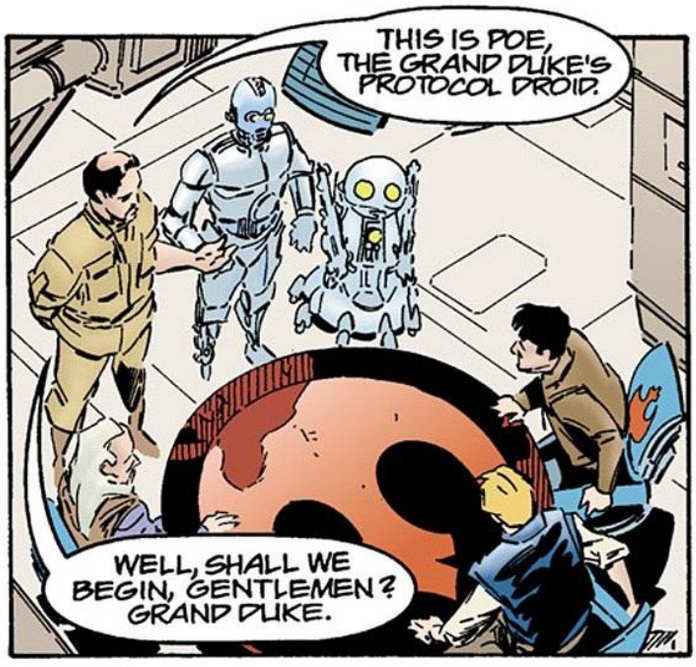
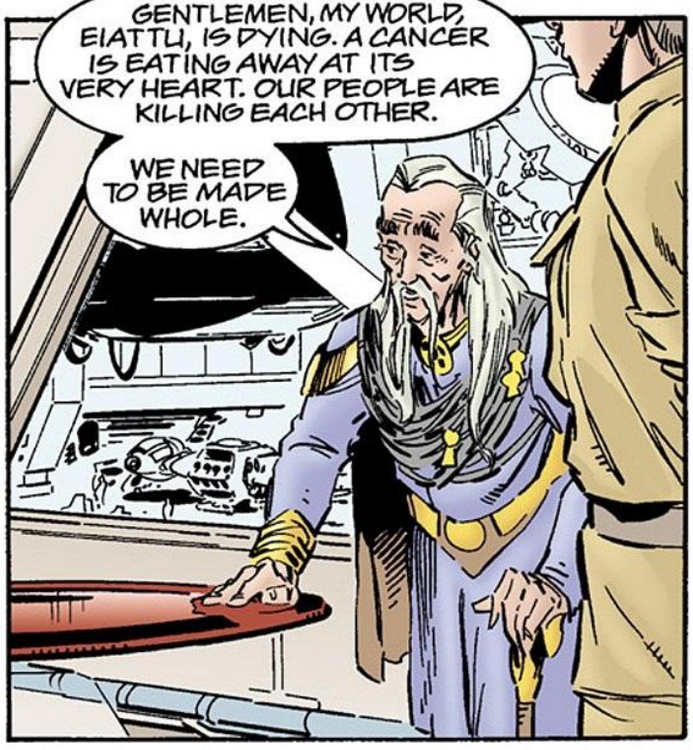
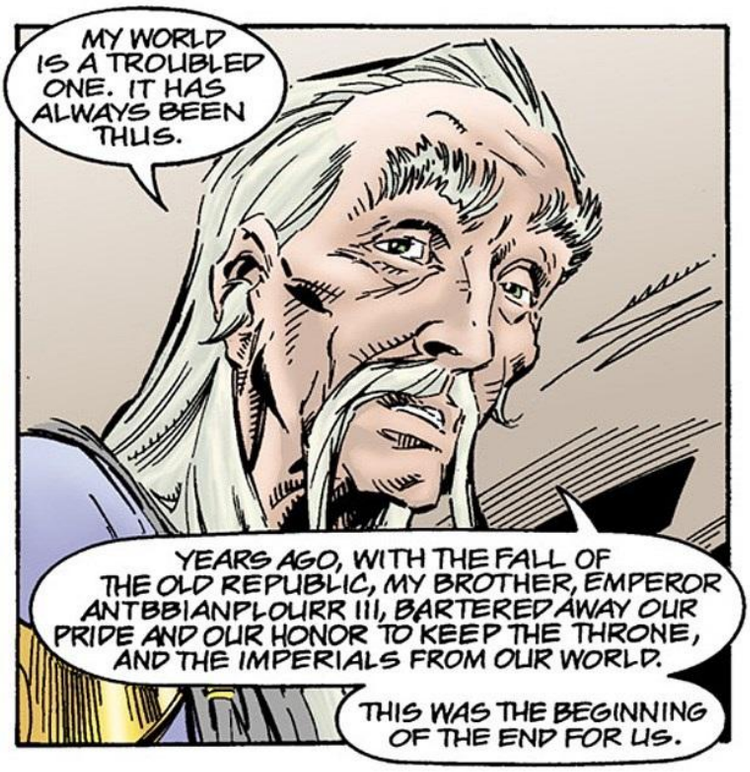
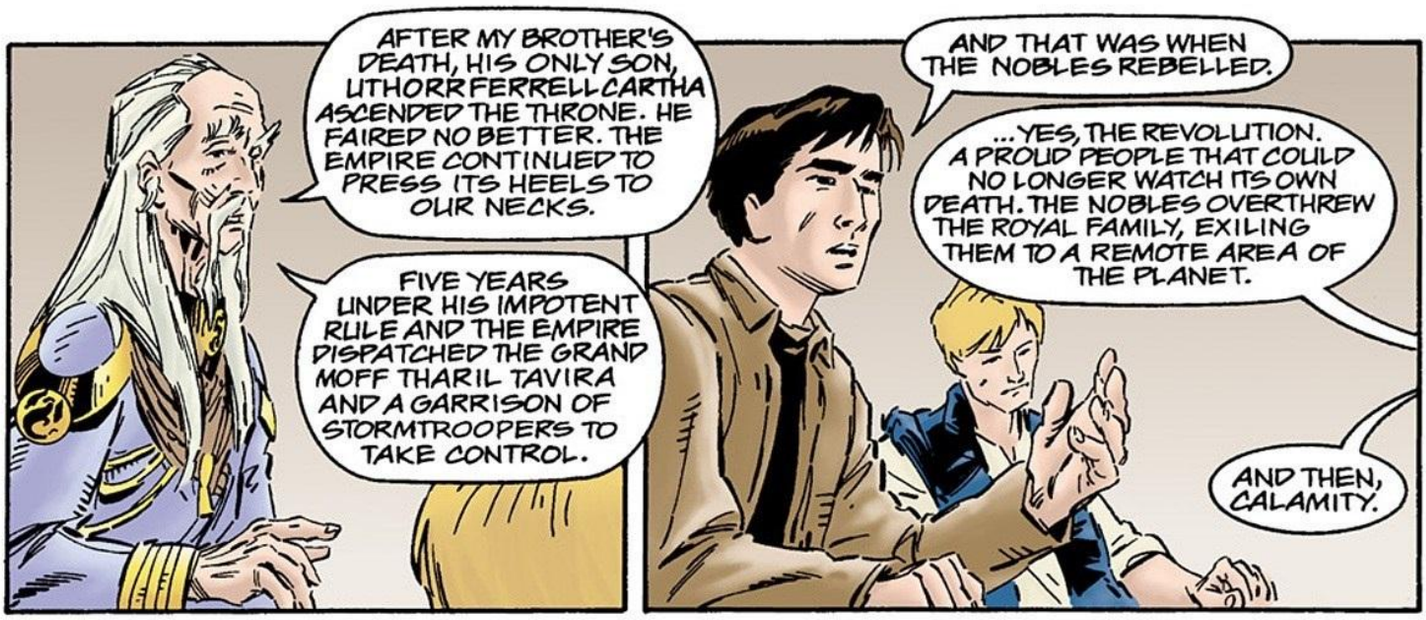
AH, HERE THEY ARE NOW, GRAND DUKE.

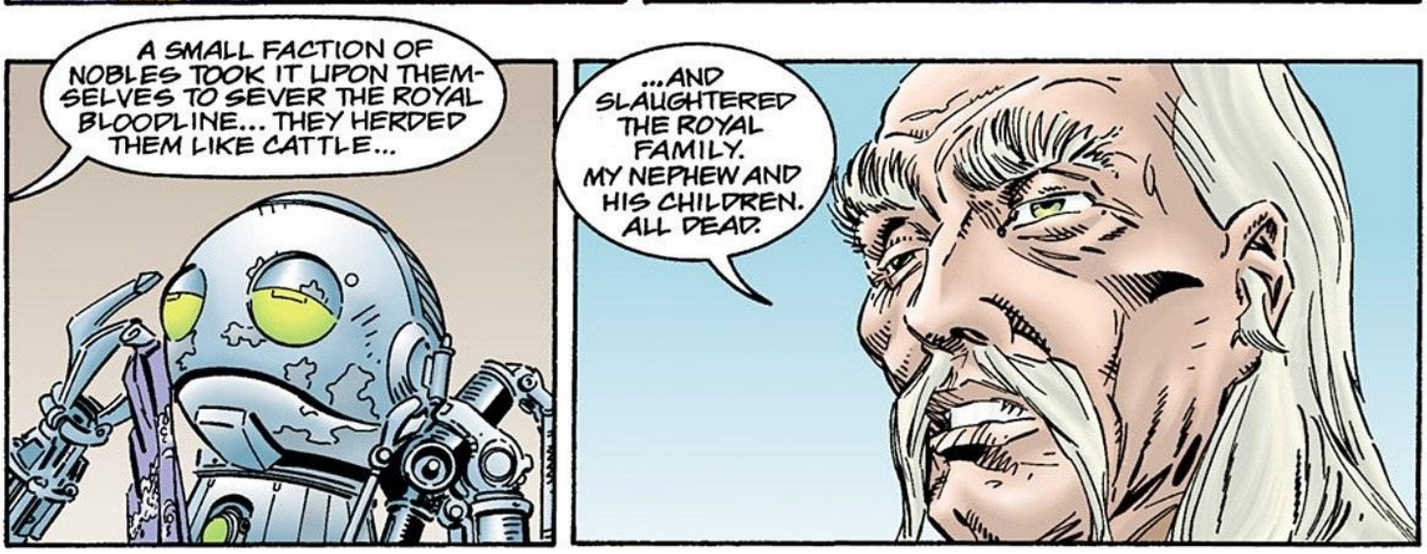

CAPTAIN WEDGE ANTILLES, MAY I PRESENT THE GRAND DUKE GROR PERNON.
AN HONOR, SIR. MAY I PRESENT ONE OF MY OFFICERS, LT. TYCHO CELCHU.
MY LORD.


THIS IS POE, THE GRAND DUKE'S PROTOCOL DROID.
WELL, SHALL WE BEGIN, GENTLEMEN? GRAND DUKE.


GENTLEMEN, MY WORLD, EIATTU, IS DYING. A CANCER IS EATING AWAY AT ITS VERY HEART. OUR PEOPLE ARE KILLING EACH OTHER.
WE NEED TO BE MADE WHOLE.

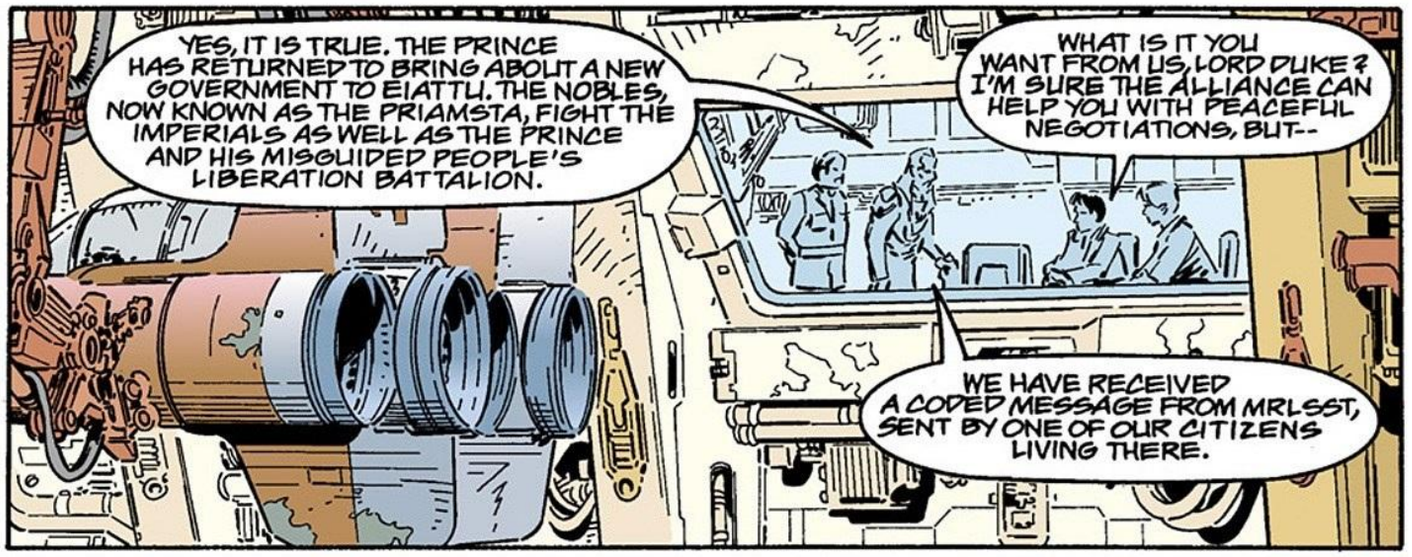

MY WORLD IS A TROUBLED ONE. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THUS.
YEARS AGO, WITH THE FALL OF THE OLD REPUBLIC, MY BROTHER, EMPEROR ANTBBIANPLOURR III, BARTERED AWAY OUR PRIDE AND OUR HONOR TO KEEP THE THRONE, AND THE IMPERIALS FROM OUR WORLD.
THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR US.


AFTER MY BROTHER'S DEATH, HIS ONLY SON, UTHORR FERRELL CARTHA ASCENDED THE THRONE. HE FAIRED NO BETTER. THE EMPIRE CONTINUED TO PRESS ITS HEELS TO OUR NECKS.
FIVE YEARS UNDER HIS IMPOTENT RULE AND THE EMPIRE DISPATCHED THE GRAND MOFF THARIL TAVIRA AND A GARRISON OF STORMTROOPERS TO TAKE CONTROL.
AND THAT WAS WHEN THE NOBLES REBELLED.
...YES, THE REVOLUTION. A PROUD PEOPLE THAT COULD NO LONGER WATCH ITS OWN DEATH. THE NOBLES OVERTHREW THE ROYAL FAMILY, EXILING THEM TO A REMOTE AREA OF THE PLANET.
AND THEN, CALAMITY.


A SMALL FACTION OF NOBLES TOOK IT UPON THEMSELVES TO SEVER THE ROYAL BLOODLINE... THEY HERDED THEM LIKE CATTLE...
...AND SLAUGHTERED THE ROYAL FAMILY. MY NEPHEW AND HIS CHILDREN. ALL DEAD.

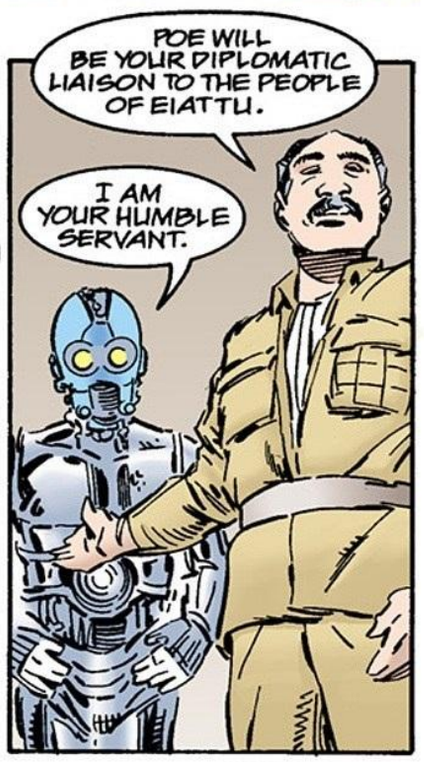
OR SO WE THOUGHT.
IMPERIAL INVESTIGATORS CONFIRMED THE DEATHS, IDENTIFYING ALL THE BODIES SAVE THAT OF THE YOUNGEST PRINCESS AND THE PRINCE.
WHEN WE HEARD THIS, WE THOUGHT IT A CRUEL TRICK PLAYED BY THE IMPERIALS.

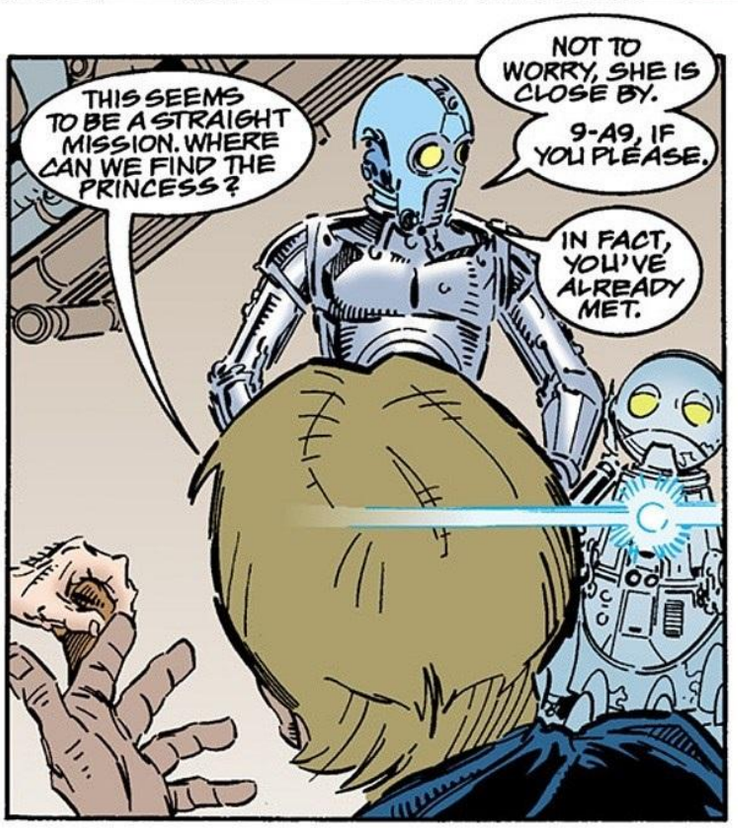
THAT IS UNTIL LAST MONTH, WHEN PRINCE HARRANDATHA RETURNED.
WHAT?


YES, IT IS TRUE. THE PRINCE HAS RETURNED TO BRING ABOUT A NEW GOVERNMENT TO EIATTU. THE NOBLES, NOW KNOWN AS THE PRIAMSTA, FIGHT THE IMPERIALS AS WELL AS THE PRINCE AND HIS MISGUIDED PEOPLE'S LIBERATION BATTALION.
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT FROM US, LORD DUKE? I'M SURE THE ALLIANCE CAN HELP YOU WITH PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS, BUT--
WE HAVE RECEIVED A CODED MESSAGE FROM MRLSST, SENT BY ONE OF OUR CITIZENS LIVING THERE.

THE MESSAGE STATES THAT THE PRINCESS IS ALIVE AND ON THIS WORLD. WE'VE MADE INQUIRIES THROUGH THE ALLIANCE NETWORK AND HAVE IDENTIFIED THE LOST PRINCESS.
YOUR MISSION, CAPTAIN ANTILLES, IS TO ESCORT THE PRINCESS BACK TO EIATTU.
WITH THE RETURN OF THE PRINCESS, PERHAPS THE BICKERING BETWEEN THE PRIMS AND THE PLB CAN BE PUT TO AN END.

THE ALLIANCE AND THE GRAND DUKE HAVE COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING ON THIS MATTER. THE ALLIANCE WOULD BENEFIT GREATLY WITH EIATTU UNITED. ALL WE ASK OF YOU AND YOUR TEAM IS TO HELP BRING IT ABOUT.
WE SERVE THE ALLIANCE, BUT WHY US? SURELY, ALLIANCE NEGOTIATORS WOULD BE BETTER SUITED TO THIS.

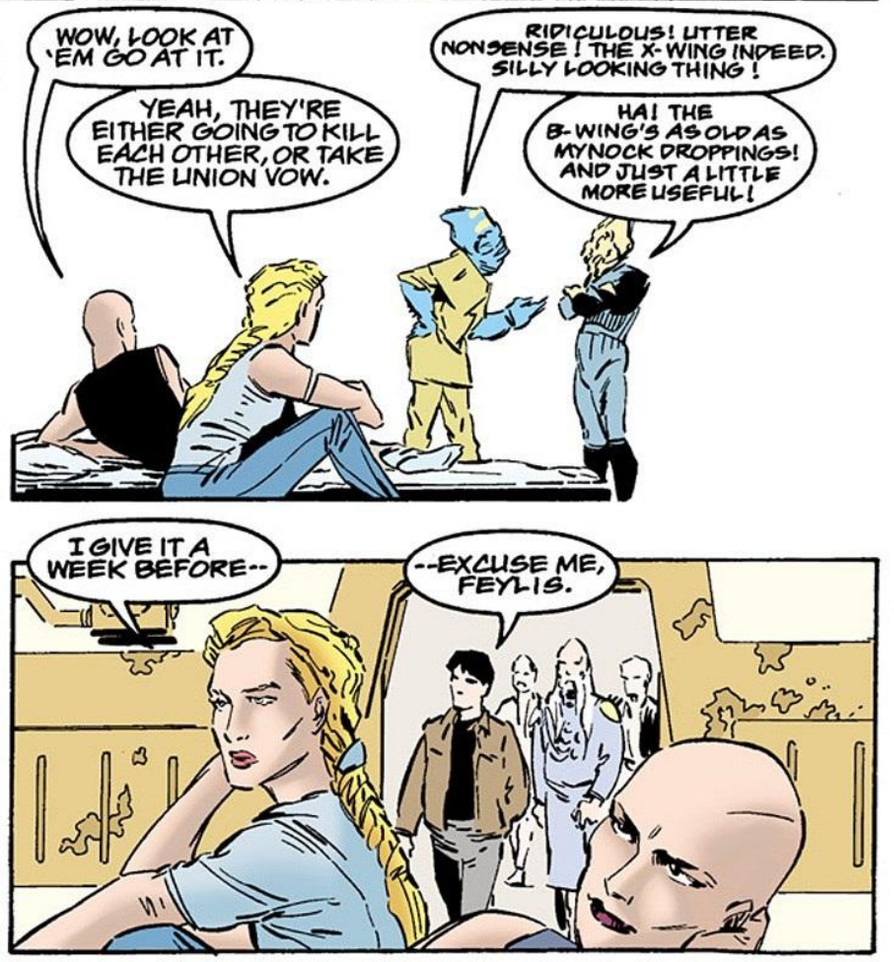

POE WILL BE YOUR DIPLOMATIC LIAISON TO THE PEOPLE OF EIATTU.
I AM YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT.

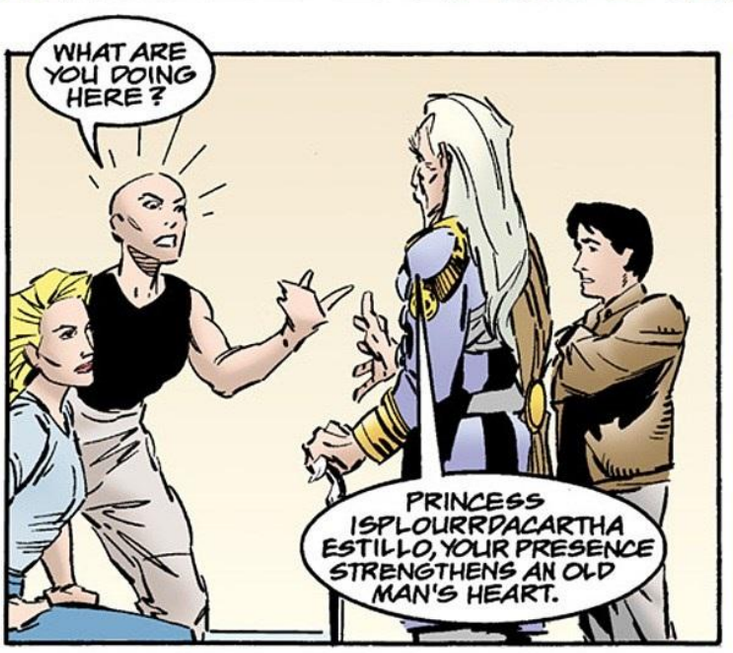

THIS SEEMS TO BE A STRAIGHT MISSION. WHERE CAN WE FIND THE PRINCESS?
NOT TO WORRY, SHE IS CLOSE BY.
9-A9, IF YOU PLEASE.
IN FACT, YOU'VE ALREADY MET.

SITHSPAWN! I'D NEVER HAVE GUESSED.
NOR I. IF YOU'LL FOLLOW ME, GENTLEMEN.

SHE HAS A POINT, NRIN, THE X-WING IS A DATED SHIP.
DAMN RIGHT I HAVE A POINT! THE X-WING IS OBSOLETE! THE B-WING IS THE FUTURE OF SPACE COMBAT.
I'LL NOT HEAR ANY MORE OF THESE FOUL SLANDERS AGAINST A GALLANT SHIP THAT HAS DISTINGUISHED ITSELF IN BATTLE AFTER BATTLE!

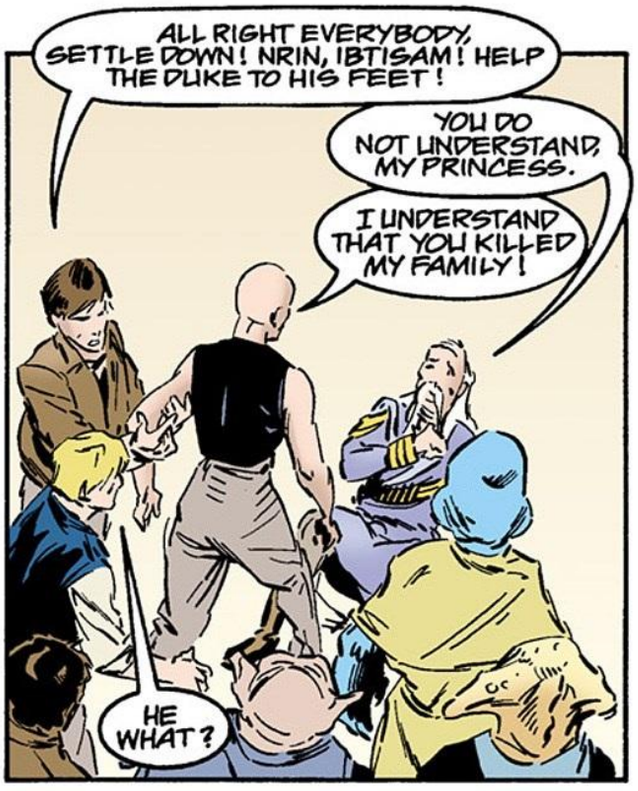
OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT IT WAS AN X-WING THAT DESTROYED THE FIRST DEATH STAR SINGLE-HANDED! OBSOLETE, INDEED!
OH, DON'T BE SO MELODRAMATIC! SURE AN X-WING DESTROYED THE DEATH STAR, BUT THAT X-WING HAD A GREAT PILOT AT THE CONTROLS, WITH THE FORCE AS HIS CO-PILOT.
IF THE X-WING DIDN'T HAVE THAT BLIND SPOT AT THE REAR OF ITS BELLY, OUR OWN CAPTAIN MIGHT HAVE TAKEN OUT THE DEATH STAR! THE B-WING HAS NO BLIND SPOT!


WOW, LOOK AT 'EM GO AT IT.
YEAH, THEY'RE EITHER GOING TO KILL EACH OTHER, OR TAKE THE UNION VOW.
RIDICULOUS! UTTER NONSENSE! THE X-WING INDEED. SILLY LOOKING THING!
HA! THE B-WING'S AS OLD AS MYNOCK DROPPINGS! AND JUST A LITTLE MORE USEFUL!
I GIVE IT A WEEK BEFORE--
--EXCUSE ME, FEYLIS.


WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
PRINCESS ISPLOURRDACARTHA ESTILLO, YOUR PRESENCE STRENGTHENS AN OLD MAN'S HEART.

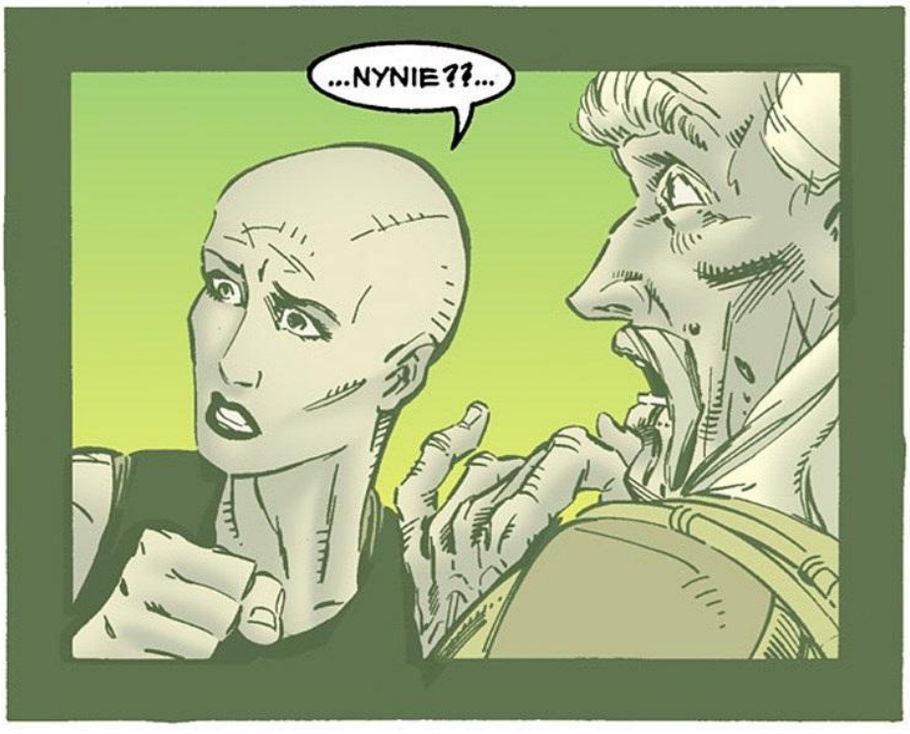
I CAN FIX THAT.

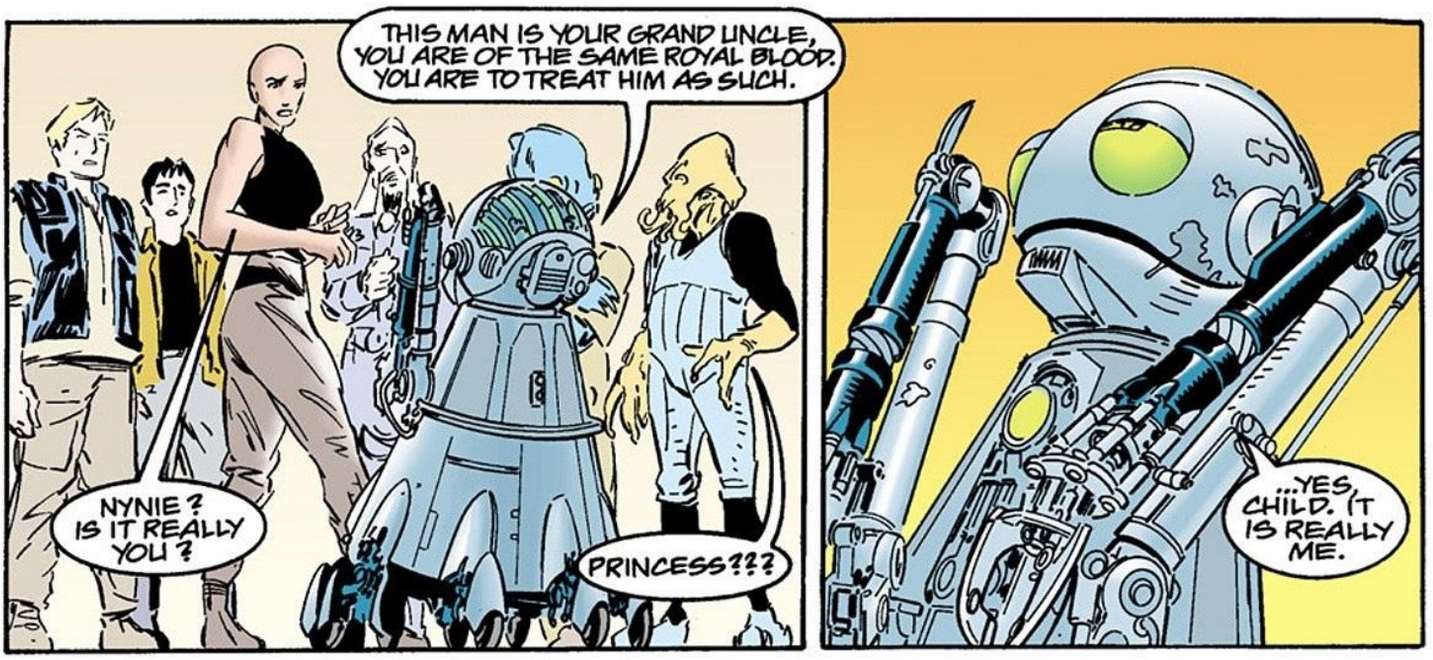
COME TO FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED YEARS AGO, YOU MURDERING BASTARD!
CAPTAIN ANTILLES! STOP HER!
HEY, PLOURR, CALM DOWN!
...NO... MY DEAR PRINCESS.

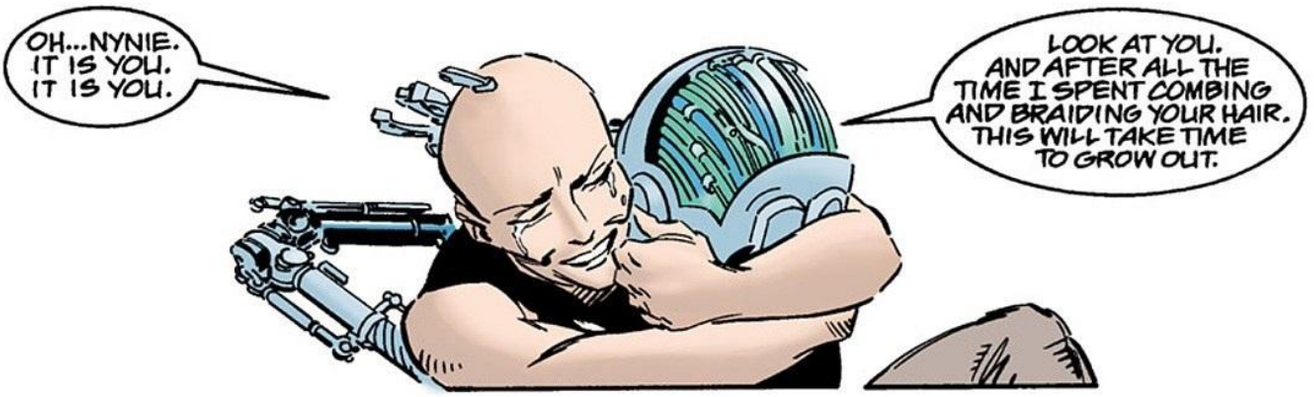

ALL RIGHT EVERYBODY, SETTLE DOWN! NRIN, IBTISAM! HELP THE DUKE TO HIS FEET!
YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND, MY PRINCESS.
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU KILLED MY FAMILY!
HE WHAT?

STAND DOWN, PLOURR! THAT'S AN ORDER!
PRINCESS, PLEASE...
STOP CALLING ME THAT!

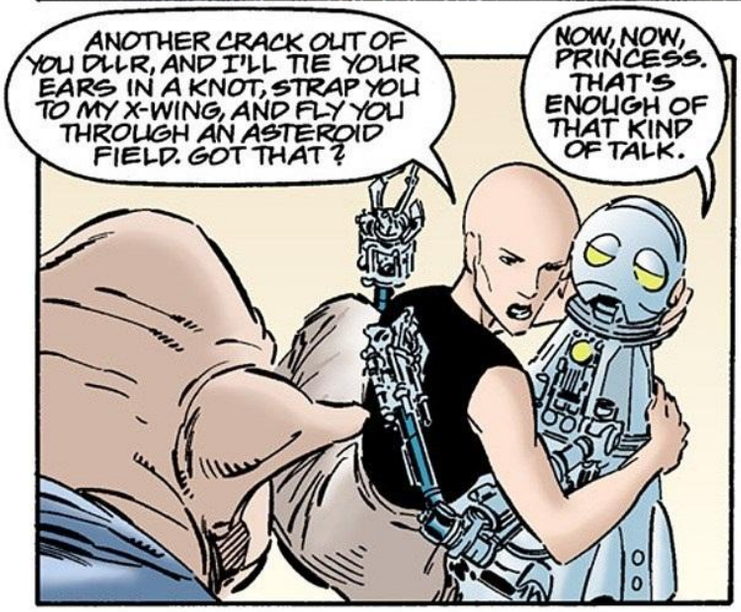
¡SPLOURRDACARTHA! I DID NOT RAISE YOU TO SPEAK SO!

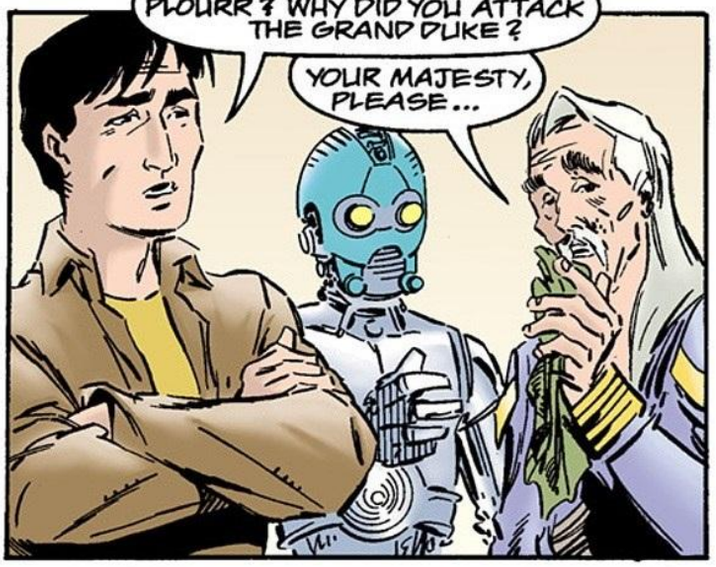

...NYNIE??...

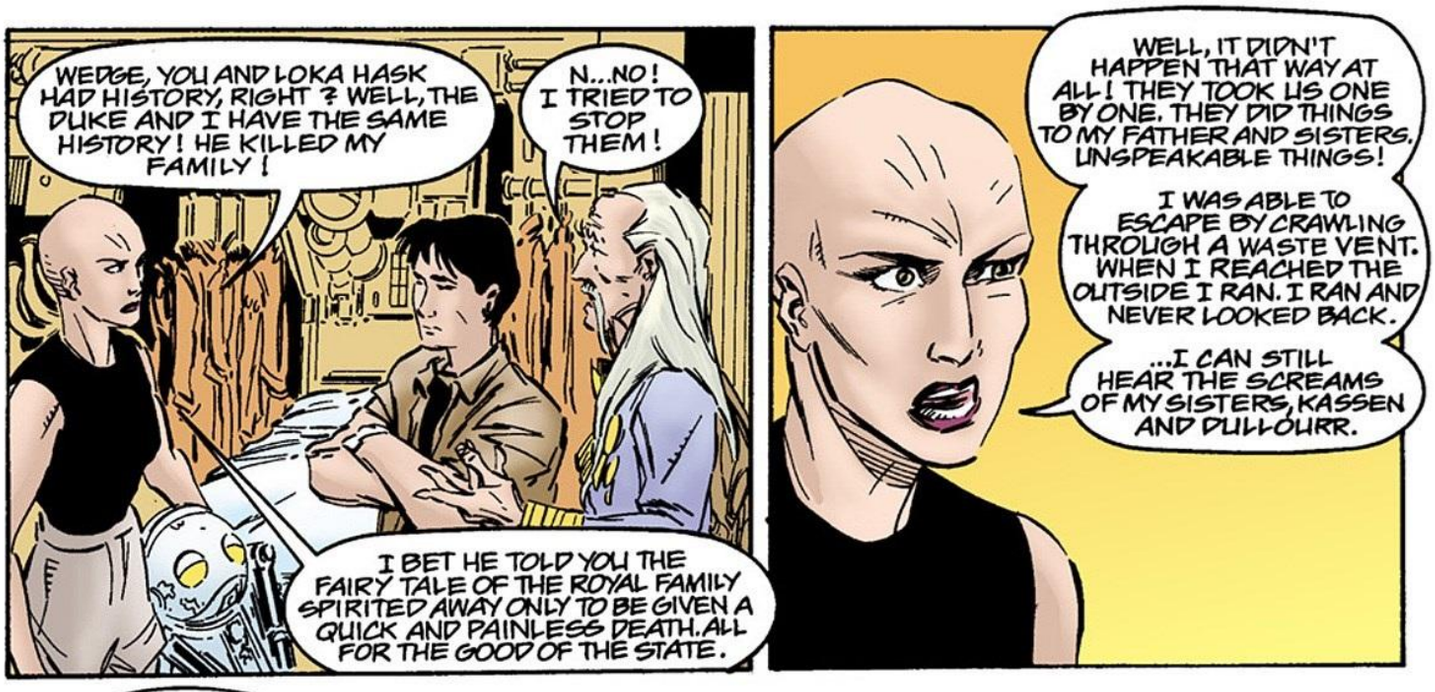

THIS MAN IS YOUR GRAND UNCLE, YOU ARE OF THE SAME ROYAL BLOOD. YOU ARE TO TREAT HIM AS SUCH.
NYNIE? IS IT REALLY YOU?
PRINCESS???
...YES, CHILD. IT IS REALLY ME.


OH...NYNIE. IT IS YOU. IT IS YOU.
LOOK AT YOU. AND AFTER ALL THE TIME I SPENT COMBING AND BRAIDING YOUR HAIR. THIS WILL TAKE TIME TO GROW OUT.

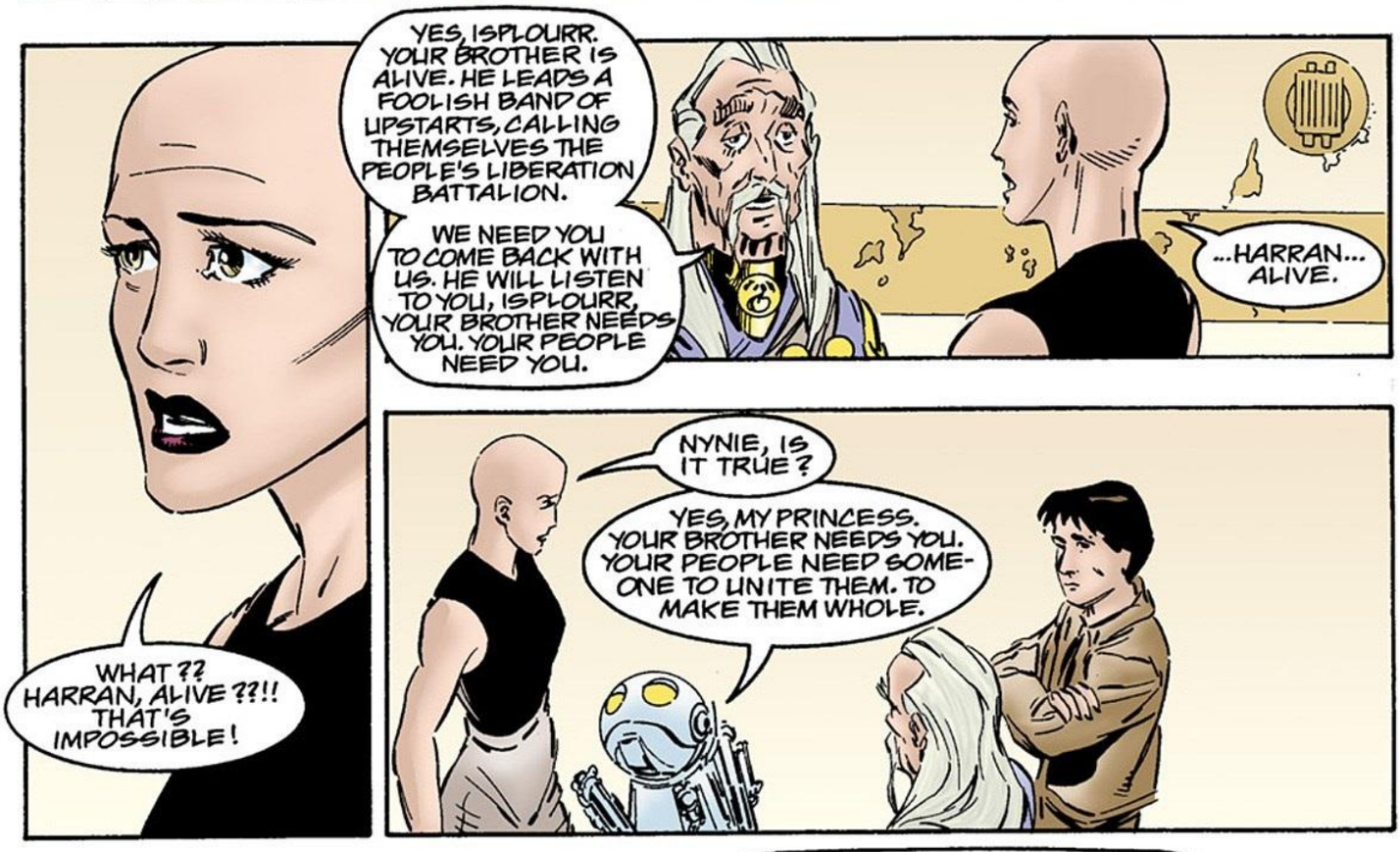
PRINCESS???
IT'S A LONG STORY.
ISSPLOURR-WHAT?
NYNIE? PLOURR HAD A NANNY??


ANOTHER CRACK OUT OF YOU DLLR, AND I'LL TIE YOUR EARS IN A KNOT, STRAP YOU TO MY X-WING, AND FLY YOU THROUGH AN ASTEROID FIELD. GOT THAT?
NOW, NOW, PRINCESS. THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT KIND OF TALK.

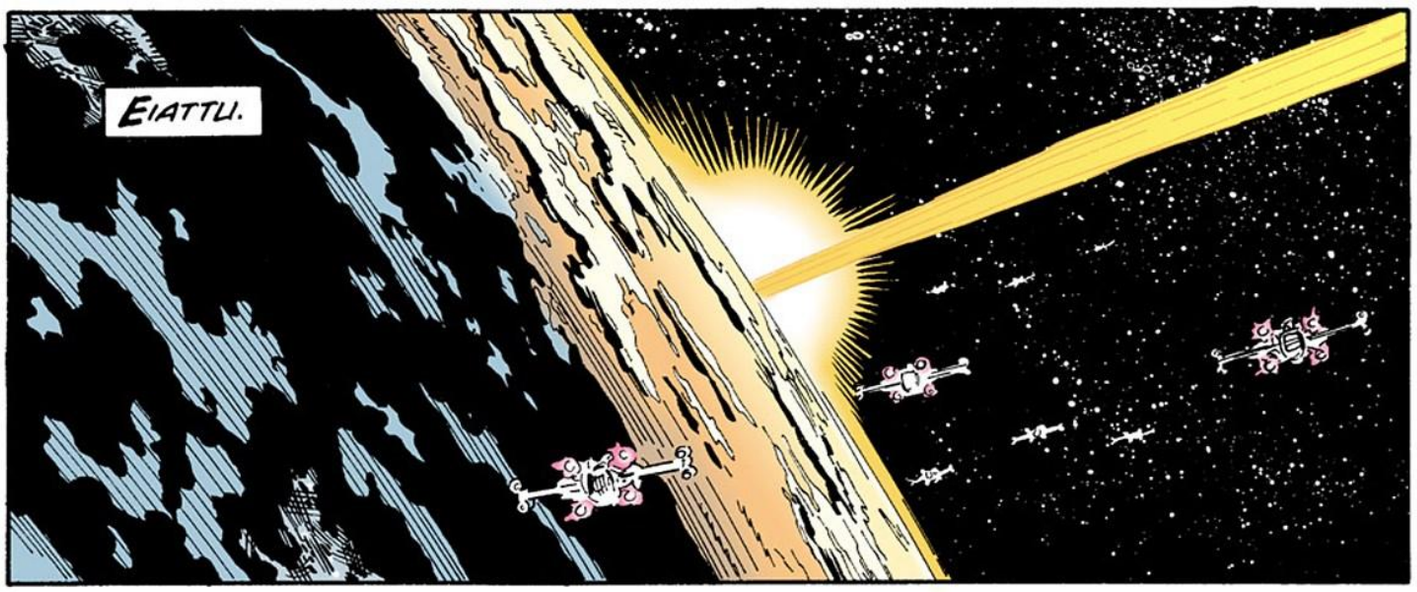

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, PLOURR? WHY DID YOU ATTACK THE GRAND DUKE?
YOUR MAJESTY, PLEASE...

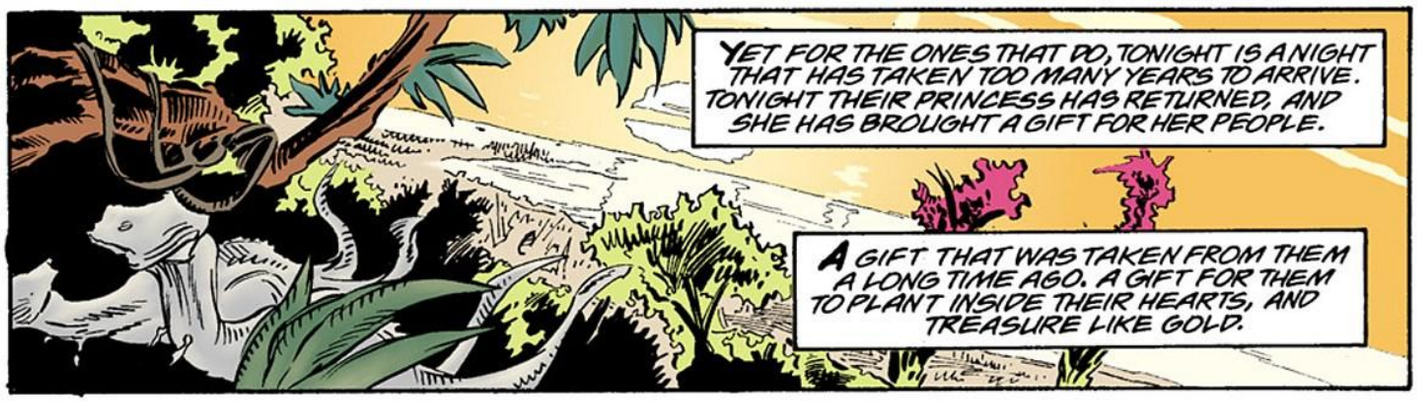

WEDGE, YOU AND LOKA HASK HAD HISTORY, RIGHT ? WELL, THE DUKE AND I HAVE THE SAME HISTORY! HE KILLED MY FAMILY!
N...NO! I TRIED TO STOP THEM!
I BET HE TOLD YOU THE FAIRY TALE OF THE ROYAL FAMILY SPIRITED AWAY ONLY TO BE GIVEN A QUICK AND PAINLESS DEATH. ALL FOR THE GOOD OF THE STATE.
WELL, IT DIDN'T HAPPEN THAT WAY AT ALL! THEY TOOK US ONE BY ONE. THEY DID THINGS TO MY FATHER AND SISTERS. UNSPEAKABLE THINGS!
I WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE BY CRAWLING THROUGH A WASTE VENT. WHEN I REACHED THE OUTSIDE I RAN. I RAN AND NEVER LOOKED BACK.
...I CAN STILL HEAR THE SCREAMS OF MY SISTERS, KASSEN AND DULLOURR.

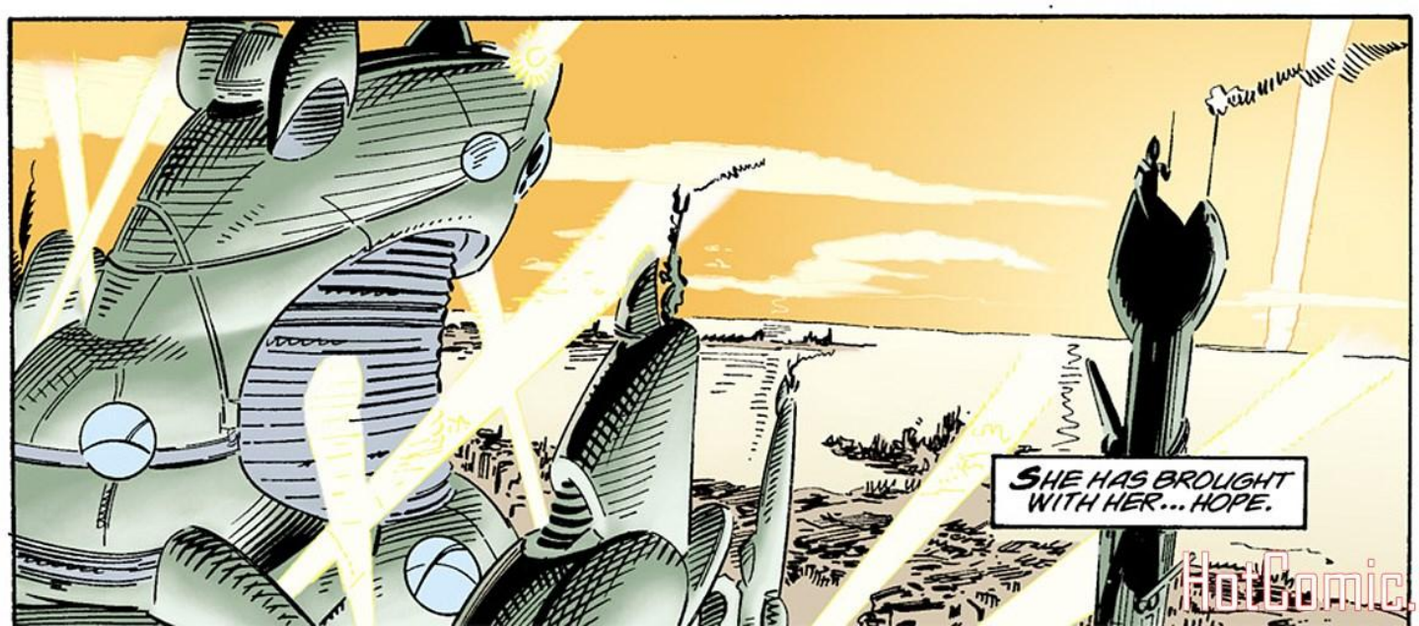
PLOURR... YOUR BROTHER... HE'S ALIVE.


YES, ISPLOURR. YOUR BROTHER IS ALIVE. HE LEADS A FOOLISH BAND OF UPSTARTS, CALLING THEMSELVES THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION BATTALION.
WE NEED YOU TO COME BACK WITH US. HE WILL LISTEN TO YOU, ISPLOURR, YOUR BROTHER NEEDS YOU. YOUR PEOPLE NEED YOU.
...HARRAN... ALIVE.
WHAT ?? HARRAN, ALIVE ??!! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
NYNIE, IS IT TRUE ?
YES, MY PRINCESS. YOUR BROTHER NEEDS YOU. YOUR PEOPLE NEED SOMEONE TO UNITE THEM. TO MAKE THEM WHOLE.

ALL RIGHT, I'LL COME WITH YOU. FOR MY FATHER AND MY SISTERS. I'LL END THIS BICKERING BETWEEN THE PRIAMSTA AND MY BROTHER.
AND IF THE PRIAMSTA WON'T LISTEN... I'LL BREAK THEM IN TWO.







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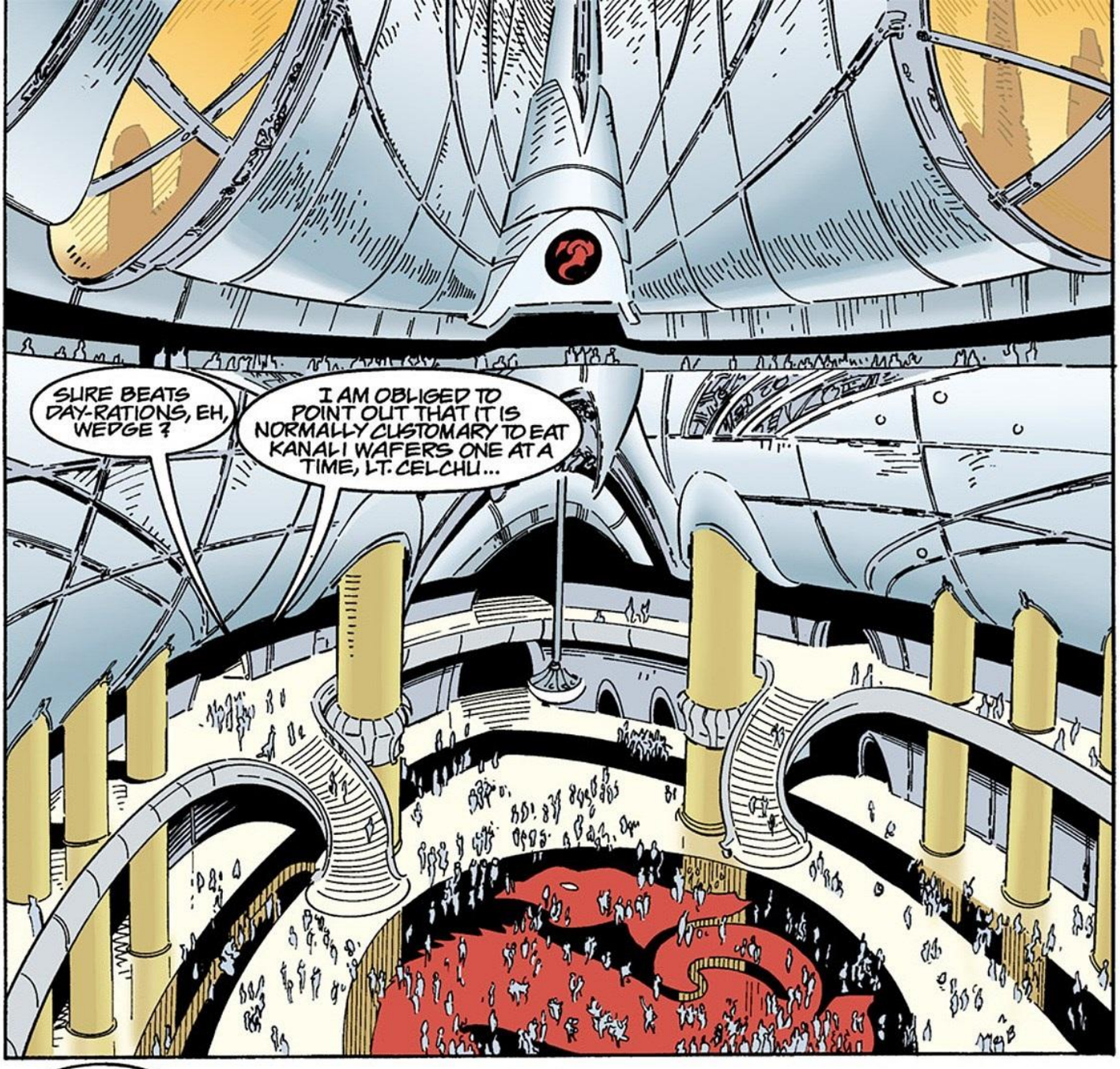
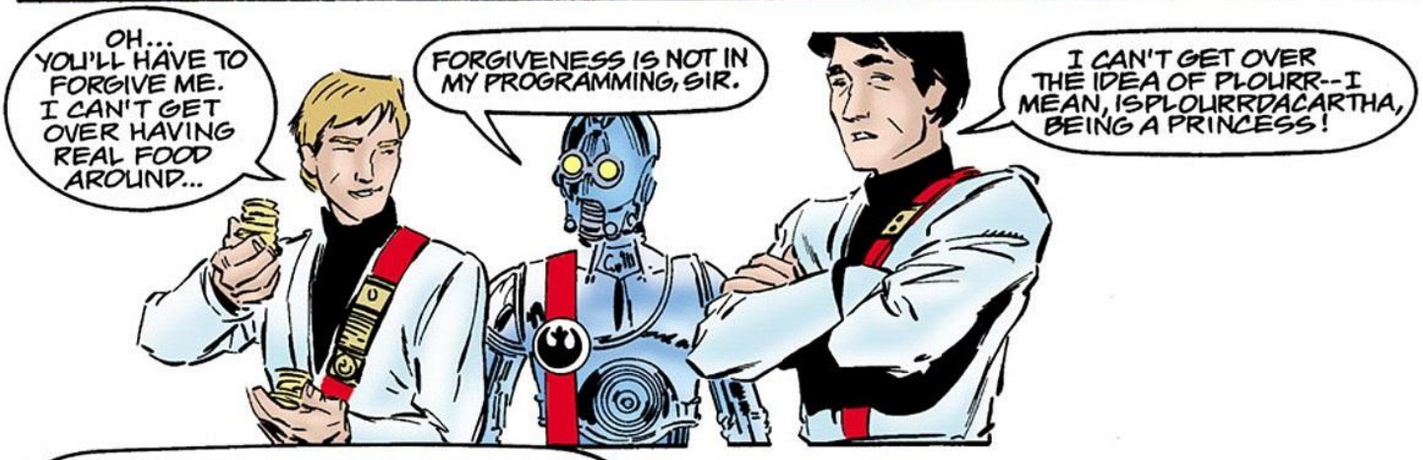
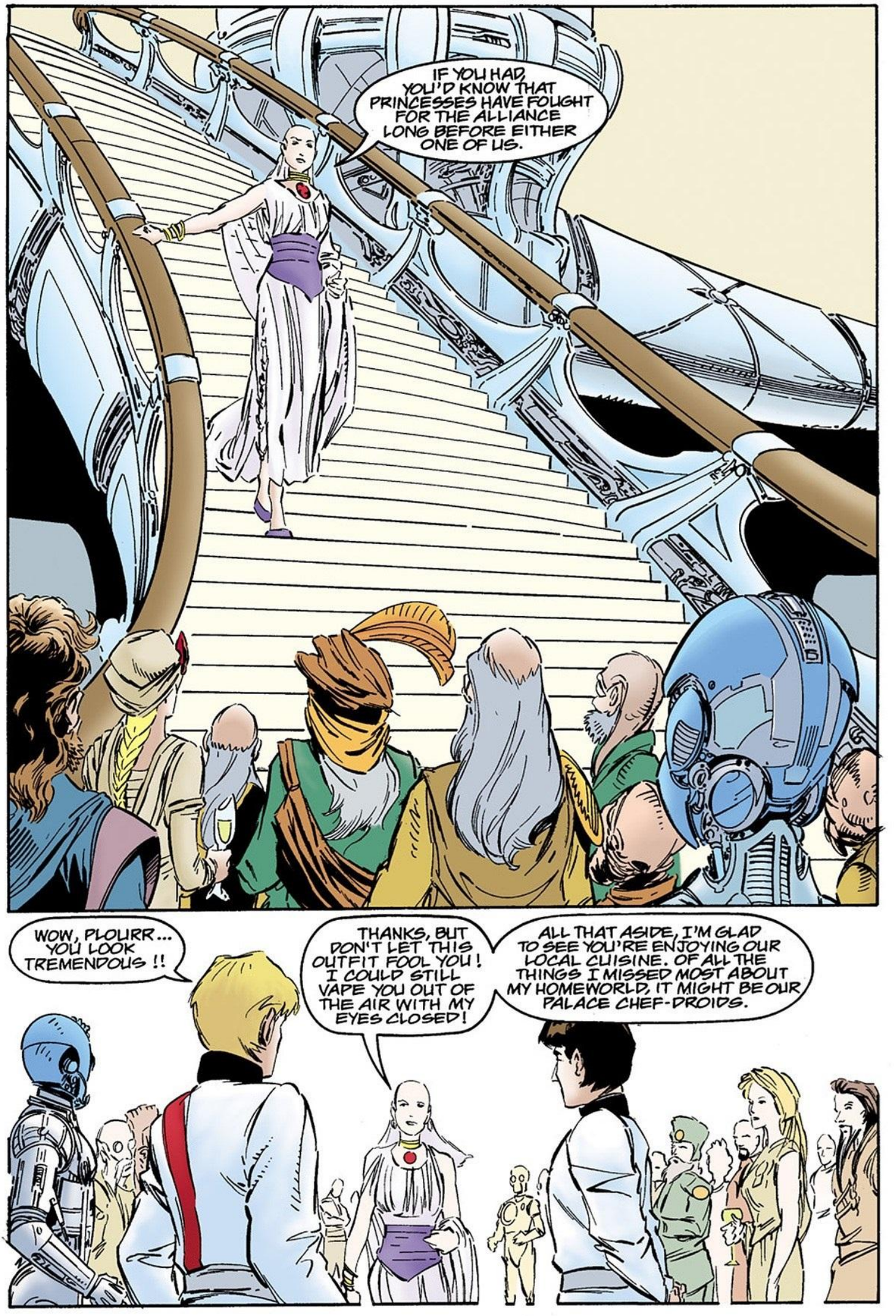
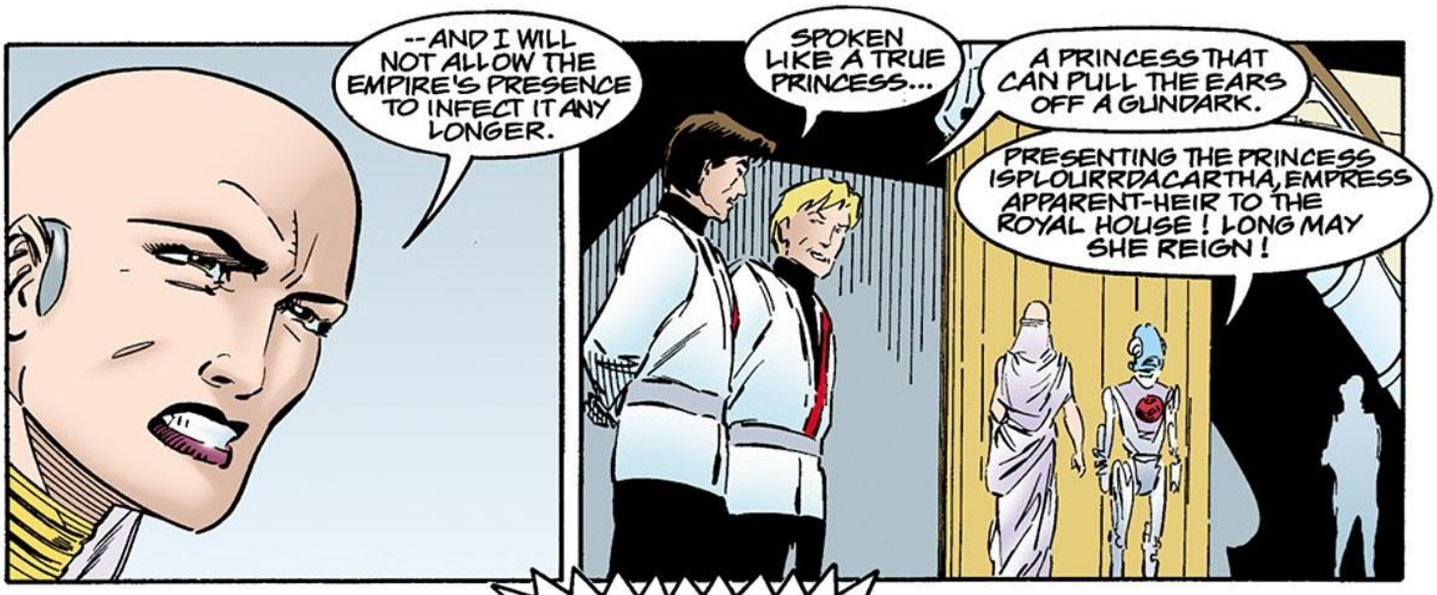

SURE BEATS DAY-RATIONS, EH, WEDGE?
I AM OBLIGED TO POINT OUT THAT IT IS NORMALLY CUSTOMARY TO EAT KANALI WAFERS ONE AT A TIME, LT. CELCHU...


OH... YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE ME. I CAN'T GET OVER HAVING REAL FOOD AROUND...
FORGIVENESS IS NOT IN MY PROGRAMMING, SIR.
I CAN'T GET OVER THE IDEA OF PLOURR--I MEAN, ISPLOURRDACARTHA, BEING A PRINCESS!

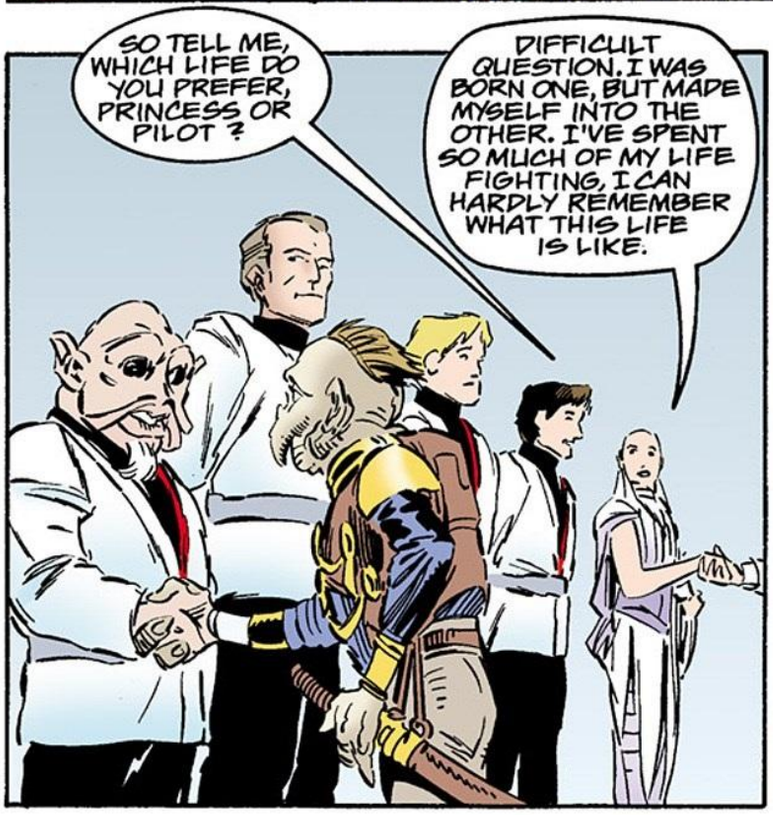
INDEED. HOW DOES SOMEONE RAISED SURROUNDED BY SUCH OPULENCE BECOME SUCH A FIERCE PILOT? YOU'D THINK SHE'D BE JUST ANOTHER SPOILED--
YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVEN'T BEEN LISTENING TO YOUR SQUADRON LEADER'S COMBAT TALES, TYCHO.

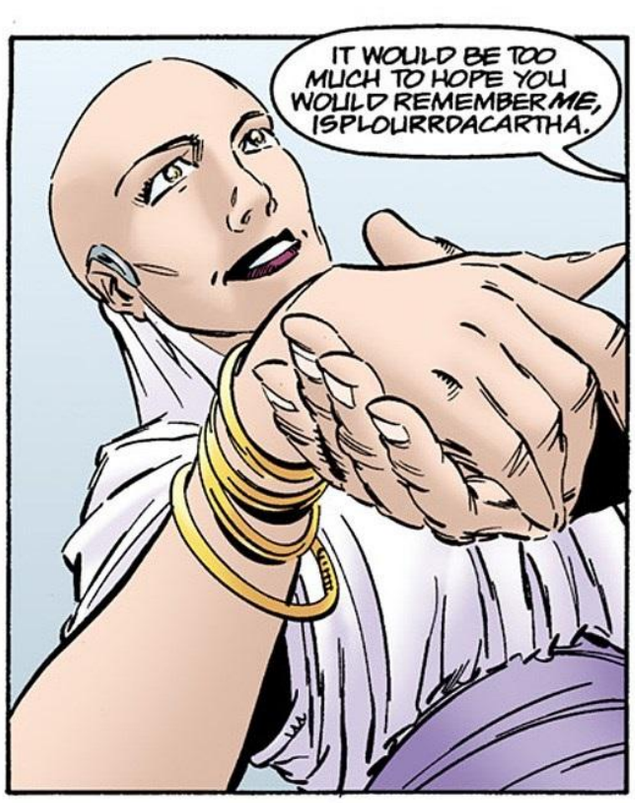

IF YOU HAD, YOU'D KNOW THAT PRINCESSES HAVE FOUGHT FOR THE ALLIANCE LONG BEFORE EITHER ONE OF US.
WOW, PLOURR... YOU LOOK TREMENDOUS !!
THANKS, BUT DON'T LET THIS OUTFIT FOOL YOU! I COULD STILL VAPE YOU OUT OF THE AIR WITH MY EYES CLOSED!
ALL THAT ASIDE, I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE ENJOYING OUR LOCAL CUISINE. OF ALL THE THINGS I MISSED MOST ABOUT MY HOMEWORLD, IT MIGHT BE OUR PALACE CHEF-DROIDS.

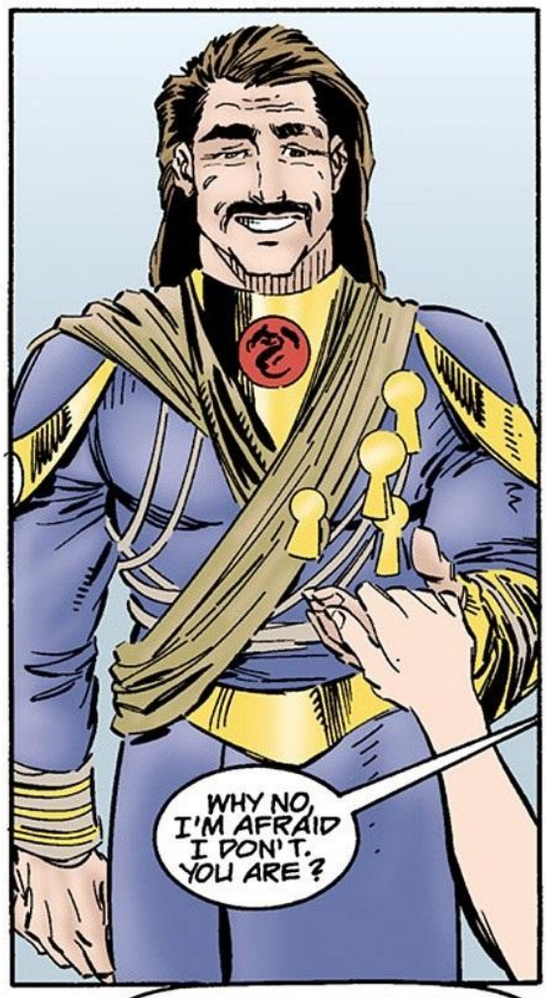
WELL, I SEE NOW THAT THERE'S A LOT THAT YOU'D MISS ABOUT THIS PLACE! IF WE HAVE A CHANCE, I'D LIKE TO BAG ONE OF THOSE THUVASAURS I SAW WANDERING AROUND WHEN I LANDED!
OF COURSE, BUT I THINK YOU'LL FIND THAT EIATTU HAS A LOT MORE TO OFFER THAN SAURIAN-HUNTING! BUT LET'S NOT FORGET WHY WE'RE HERE! THIS IS A BEAUTIFUL WORLD, GENTLEMEN--


--AND I WILL NOT ALLOW THE EMPIRE'S PRESENCE TO INFECT IT ANY LONGER.
SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE PRINCESS...
A PRINCESS THAT CAN PULL THE EARS OFF A GUNDARK.
PRESENTING THE PRINCESS ISPLOURRDACARTHA, EMPRESS APPARENT-HEIR TO THE ROYAL HOUSE! LONG MAY SHE REIGN!

LONG MAY SHE REIGN!


SO TELL ME, WHICH LIFE DO YOU PREFER, PRINCESS OR PILOT?
DIFFICULT QUESTION. I WAS BORN ONE, BUT MADE MYSELF INTO THE OTHER. I'VE SPENT SO MUCH OF MY LIFE FIGHTING, I CAN HARDLY REMEMBER WHAT THIS LIFE IS LIKE.


IT WOULD BE TOO MUCH TO HOPE YOU WOULD REMEMBER ME, ISPLOURRDACARTHA.


WHY NO, I'M AFRAID I DON'T. YOU ARE?

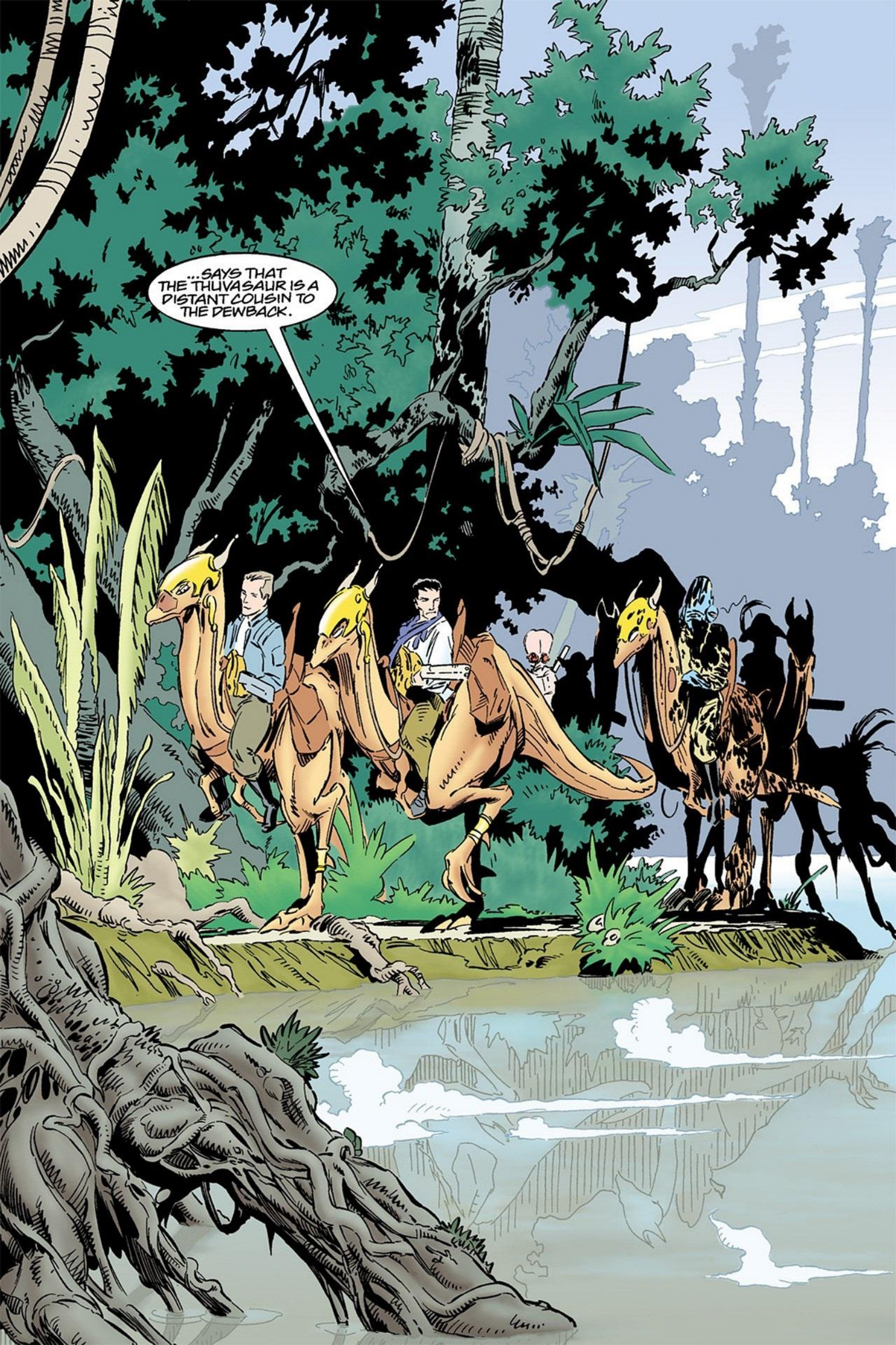
COUNT RIAL PERNON.

RIAL... AH, YES, I DO RECALL... IF YOU WILL EXCUSE ME.

SHE IS BEAUTIFUL, IS SHE NOT? EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN I REMEMBER...
SHE CERTAINLY IS... UH... I'M WEDGE ANTILLES.
PRIVILEGED TO MEET YOU. HOW DO YOU KNOW THE PRINCESS?

I'M HER COMMANDING OFFICER. HOW DO YOU KNOW HER?
I AM HER SECOND COUSIN. WE GREW UP TOGETHER.

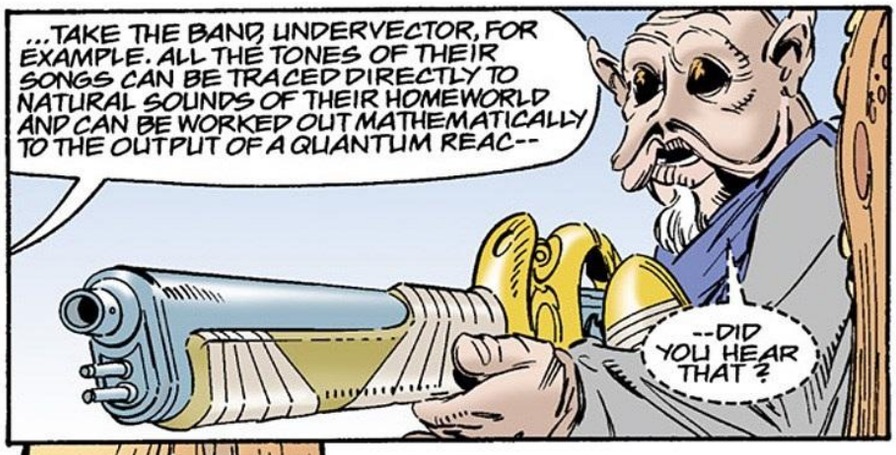
I DO ADMIT, I AM A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED IN HER REACTION. YOU WOULD THINK SHE WOULD BE HAPPIER TO SEE HER FUTURE HUSBAND...

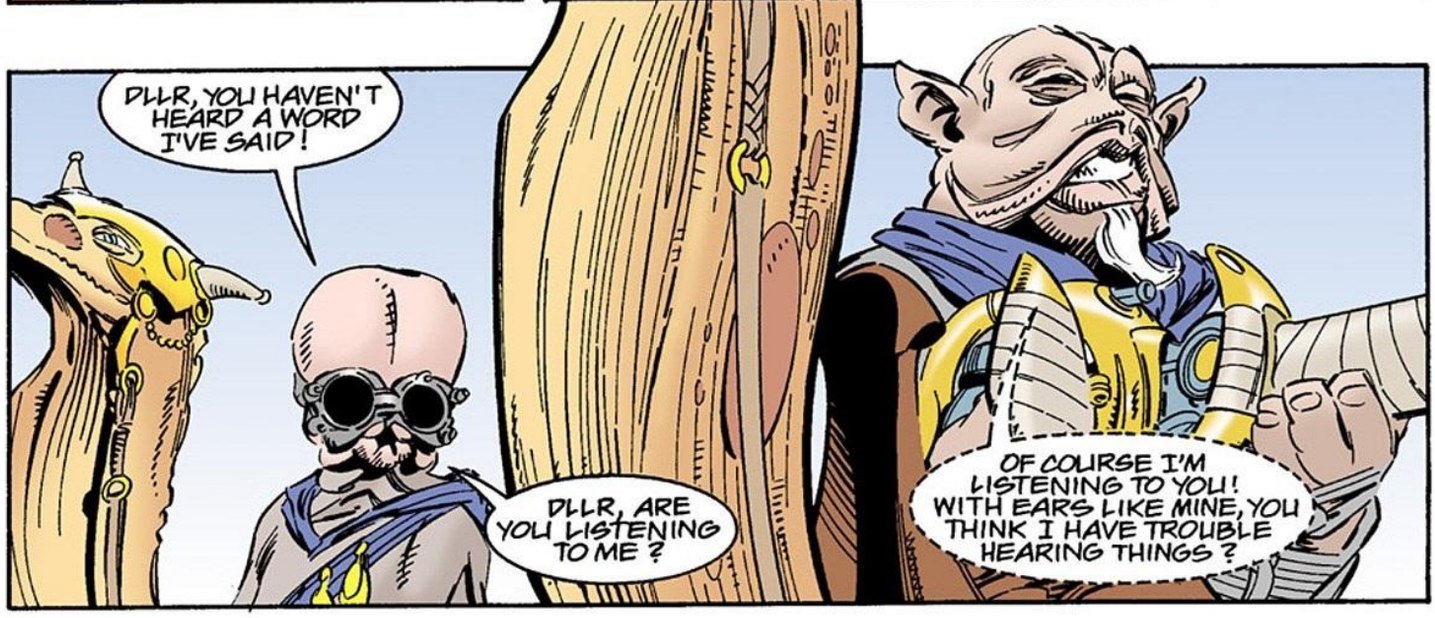

...SAYS THAT THE THUVASAUR IS A DISTANT COUSIN TO THE DEWBACK.

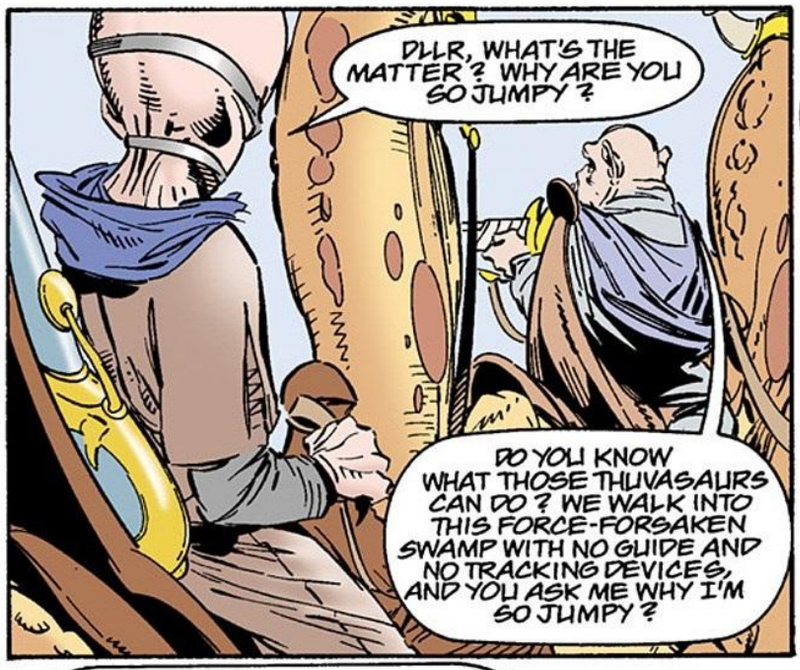
THAT SO? I THOUGHT THE DEWBACK FAMILY WAS ONLY NATIVE TO DRY WORLDS, LIKE TATOOINE OR BREEKA.
AND THE DEWBACK IS DOCILE TO A FAULT! THEY WOULDN'T HURT A--
--BUT A THUVASAUR WOULD!

THE STABLE MASTER SAYS THAT THE THUVASAURS WERE TRANSPORTED TO EIATTU SPECIFICALLY FOR SPORT. APPARENTLY THEY ADAPT QUICKLY TO HARSH ENVIRONMENTS.
IN A MATTER OF TIME THEY HAD DESTROYED THE LOCAL PREDATORS AND MOVED TO THE TOP OF THE FOOD CHAIN.

THE THUVASAURS WENT FROM BEING TAME, DOMESTIC ANIMALS TO COLD-BLOODED PREDATORS.

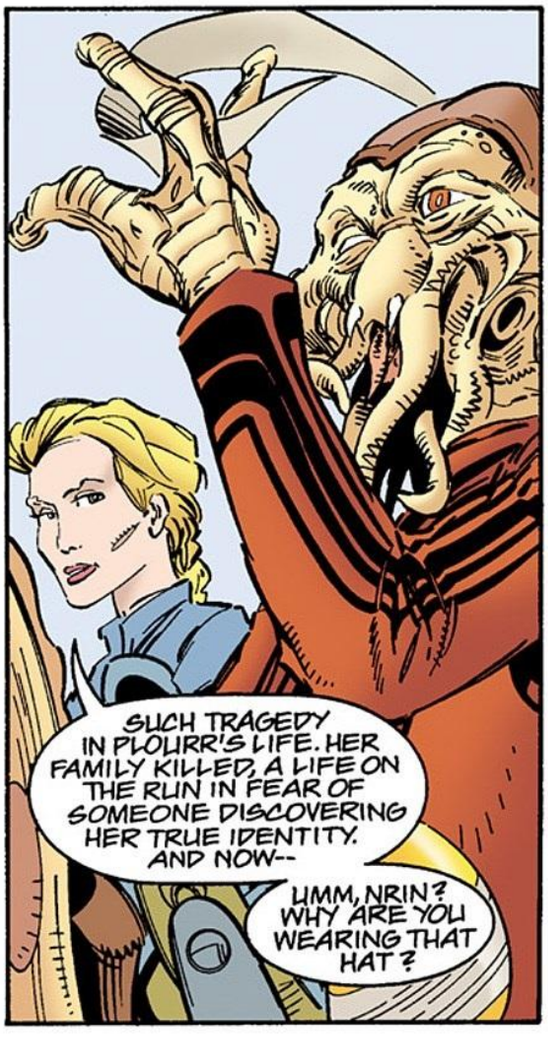

...TAKE THE BAND, UNDERVECTOR, FOR EXAMPLE. ALL THE TONES OF THEIR SONGS CAN BE TRACED DIRECTLY TO NATURAL SOUNDS OF THEIR HOMEWORLD AND CAN BE WORKED OUT MATHEMATICALLY TO THE OUTPUT OF A QUANTUM REAC--
--DID YOU HEAR THAT?

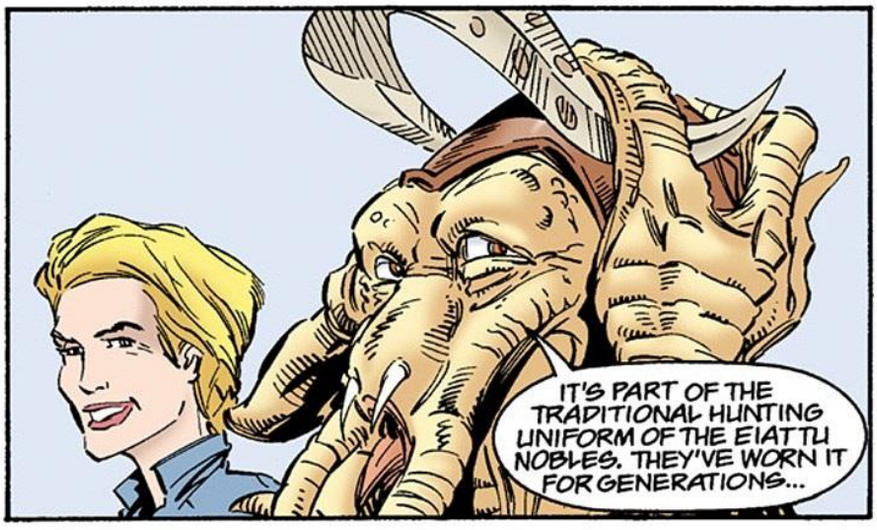

DLLR, YOU HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD I'VE SAID!
DLLR, ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?
OF COURSE I'M LISTENING TO YOU! WITH EARS LIKE MINE, YOU THINK I HAVE TROUBLE HEARING THINGS?


DLLR, WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHY ARE YOU SO JUMPY?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THOSE THUVASAURS CAN DO? WE WALK INTO THIS FORCE-FORSAKEN SWAMP WITH NO GUIDE AND NO TRACKING DEVICES, AND YOU ASK ME WHY I'M SO JUMPY?

BESIDES, I KEEP HEARING SOMETHING JUST OUT OF EARSHOT AND I CAN'T MAKE IT OUT.
AND AS FOR UNDERVECTOR'S MUSIC, THEY STINK LIKE TAUN TAUN DROPPINGS!

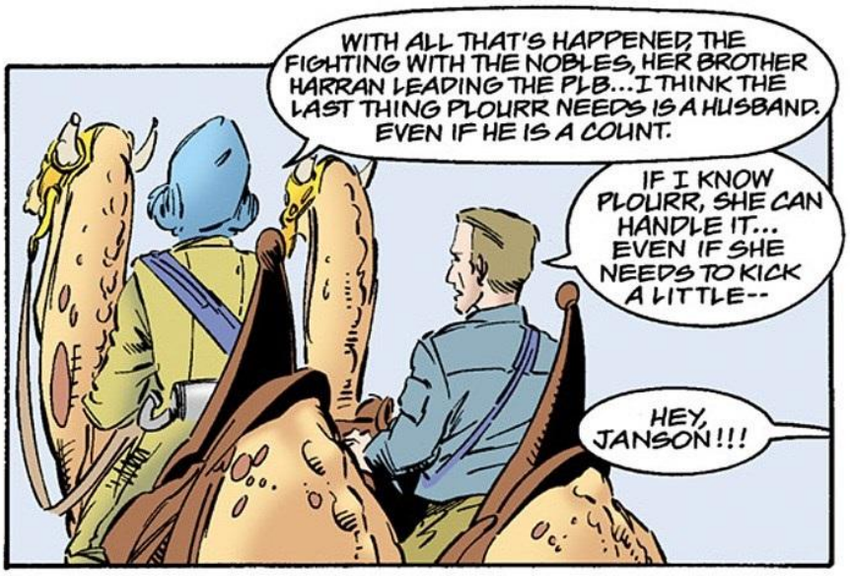
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? PLOURR A PRINCESS, AND NOT ONE OF HER CREWMATES SUSPECTED!
I SAW THE NOBILITY IN HER EYES FROM THE MOMENT I MET HER.

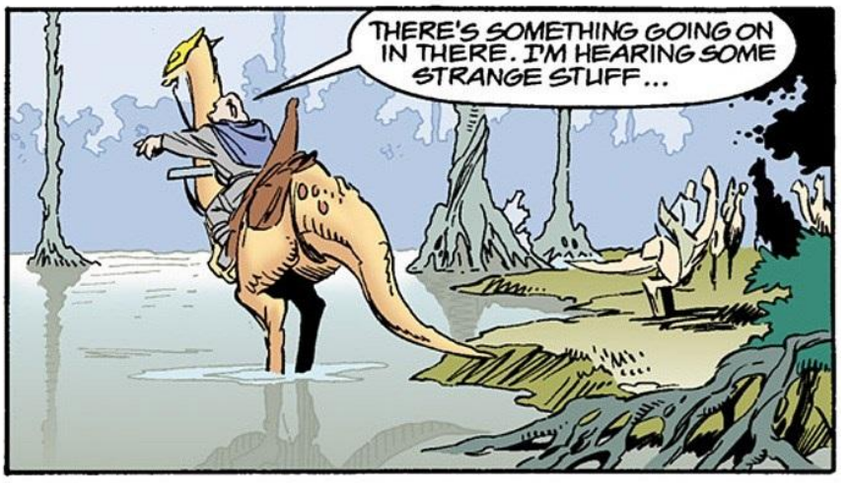

SUCH TRAGEDY IN PLOURR'S LIFE. HER FAMILY KILLED, A LIFE ON THE RUN IN FEAR OF SOMEONE DISCOVERING HER TRUE IDENTITY. AND NOW--
UMM, NRIN? WHY ARE YOU WEARING THAT HAT?


IT'S PART OF THE TRADITIONAL HUNTING UNIFORM OF THE EIATTU NOBLES. THEY'VE WORN IT FOR GENERATIONS...

...BUT HOW THEY ARE ABLE TO HUNT WEARING THIS DAMNED FEATHER, I'LL NEVER KNOW.

FROM WHAT WEDGE TELLS ME, COUNT PERNON AND PLOURR WERE BETROTHED WHEN THEY WERE CHILDREN.
IN THE EYES OF THE STATE THEY'RE MARRIED, BUT PLOURR DOESN'T QUITE SEE IT THAT WAY.
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.

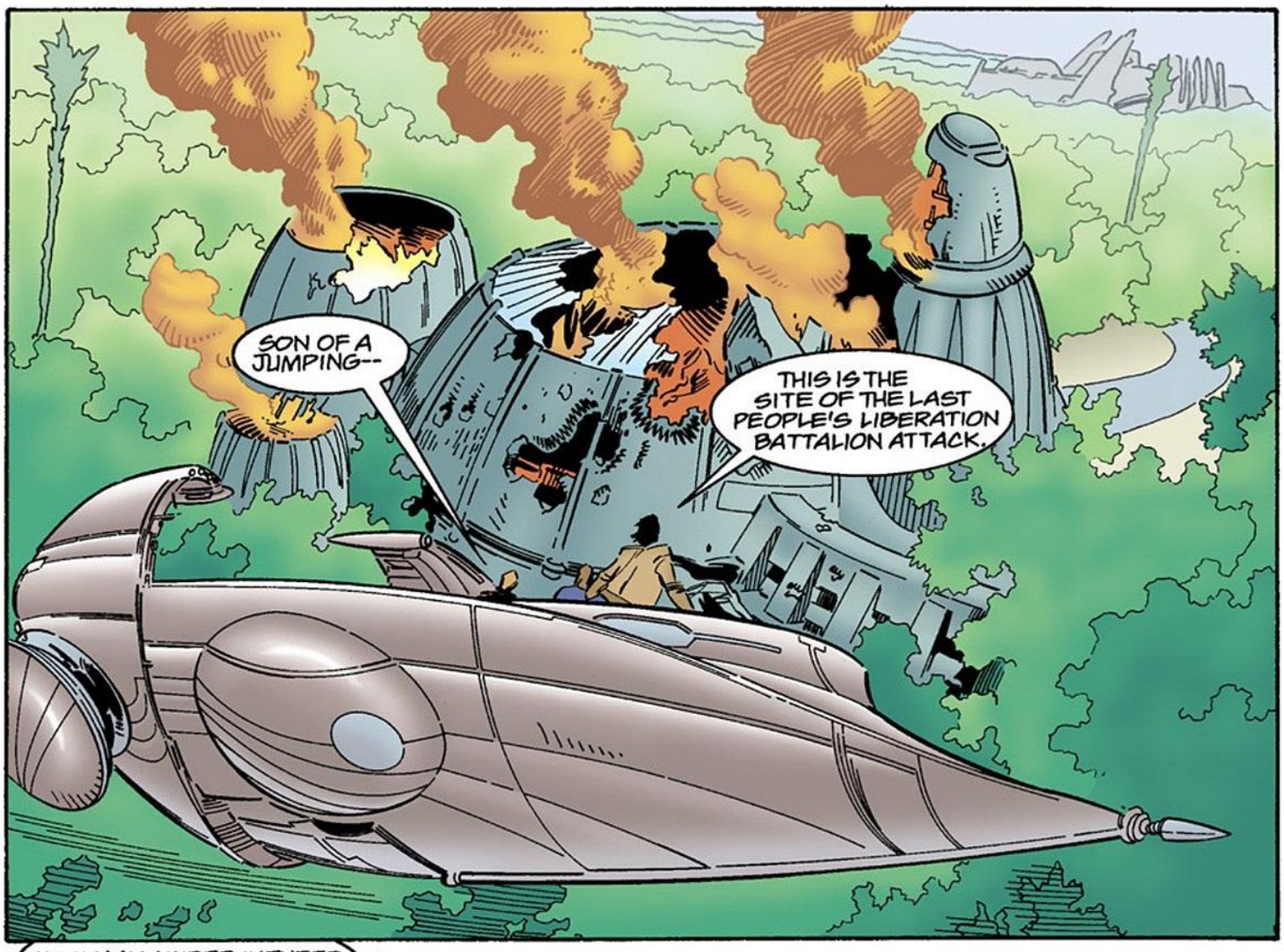

WITH ALL THAT'S HAPPENED, THE FIGHTING WITH THE NOBLES, HER BROTHER HARRAN LEADING THE PLB... I THINK THE LAST THING PLOURR NEEDS IS A HUSBAND. EVEN IF HE IS A COUNT.
IF I KNOW PLOURR, SHE CAN HANDLE IT... EVEN IF SHE NEEDS TO KICK A LITTLE--
HEY, JANSON!!!


THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON IN THERE. I'M HEARING SOME STRANGE STUFF...

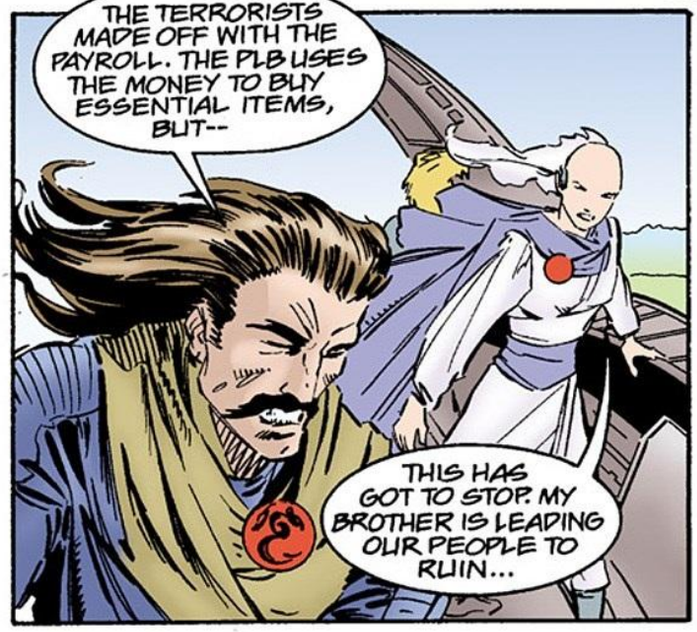
I THOUGHT THE STABLE KEEPER TOLD YOU THUVASAURS DIDN'T LIKE THE DEEPER SWAMPS...
MAYBE IT'S SOMETHING ELSE. I--
YOU HEAR THAT?

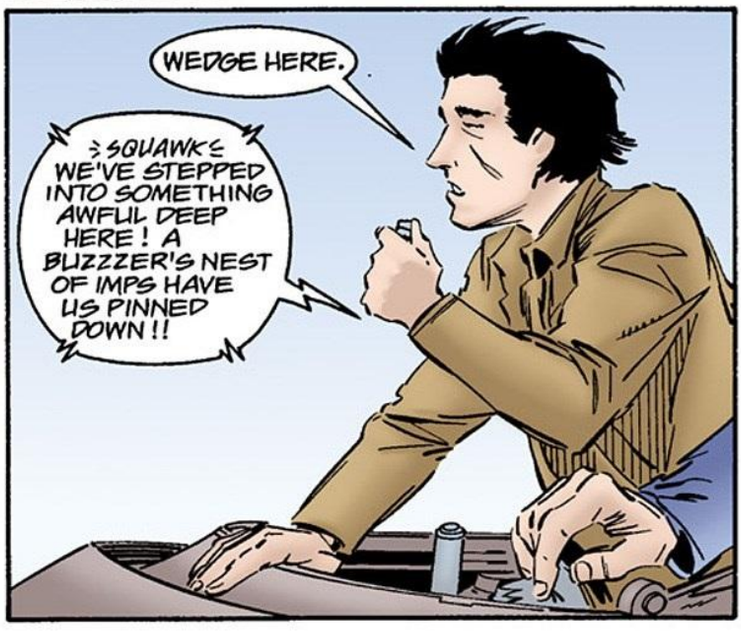
WHAT'TA YA' GOT, DLLR?
BLASTER FIRE... AND IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, BLASTER FIRE WITH AN IMP RING TO IT.

LET'S CHECK IT OUT.
MAY NOT BE AS GOOD AS A THUVASAUR PELT, BUT AN IMP HIDE'LL DO.

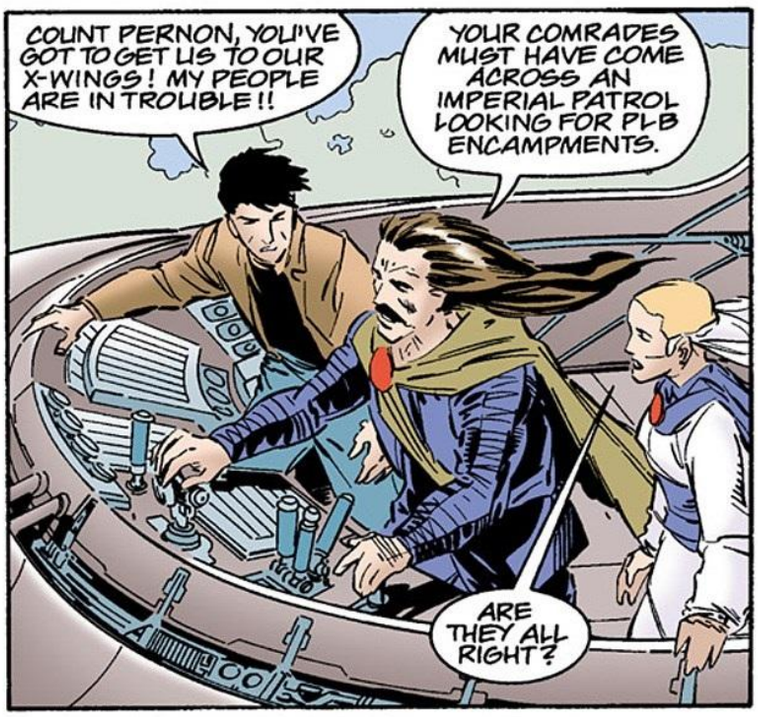

SON OF A JUMPING--
THIS IS THE SITE OF THE LAST PEOPLE'S LIBERATION BATTALION ATTACK.

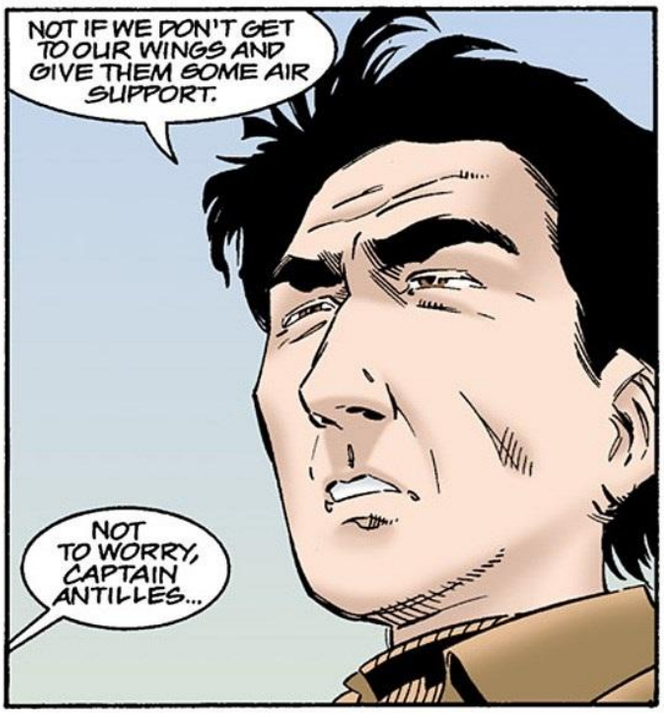
HOW MANY WERE INJURED, COUNT PERNON ?
FIFTEEN GUARDS AND AN IMPERIAL BANKER. THE ATTACK HAPPENED DURING THE TRANSPORT OF THE IMPERIAL PAYROLL, SO THERE WERE NO CIVILIANS IN THE AREA.

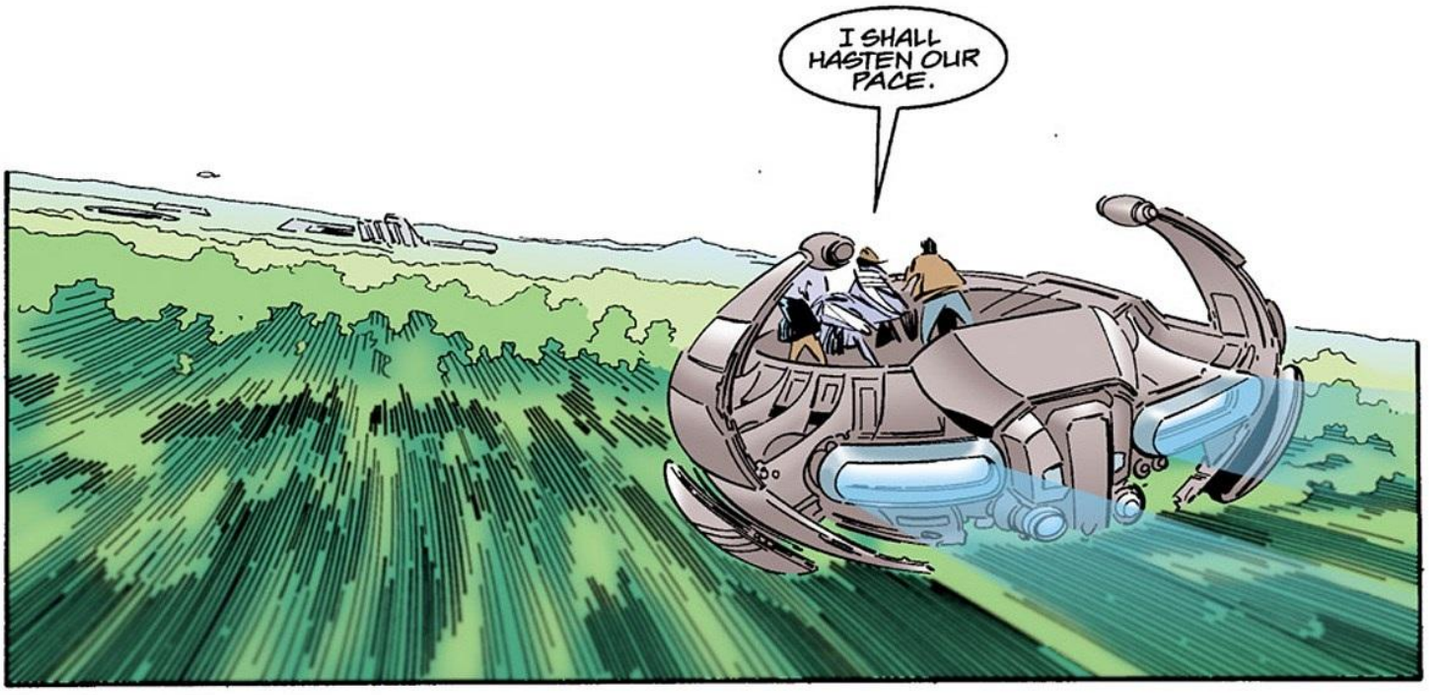

THE TERRORISTS MADE OFF WITH THE PAYROLL. THE PLB USES THE MONEY TO BUY ESSENTIAL ITEMS, BUT--
THIS HAS GOT TO STOP. MY BROTHER IS LEADING OUR PEOPLE TO RUIN...

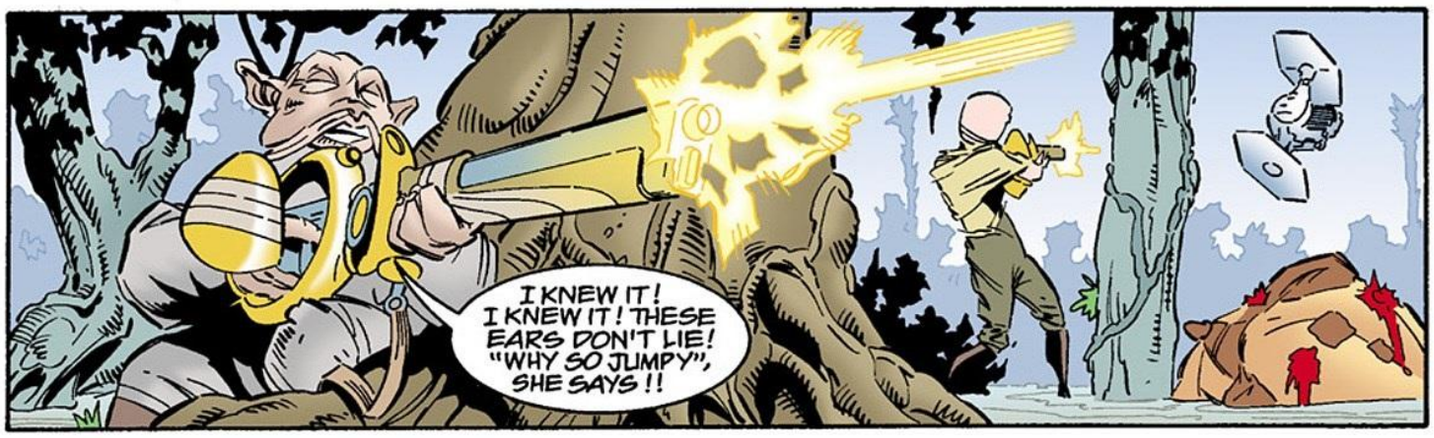

WEDGE HERE.
>SQUAWK< WE'VE STEPPED INTO SOMETHING AWFUL DEEP HERE ! A BUZZZER'S NEST OF IMPS HAVE US PINNED DOWN !!

THEY'RE ALL OVER US, WEDGE! WE CAN'T HOLD OFF THE TROOPERS AND THE TIES!
HOLD TIGHT, JANSON!! WE'RE ON OUR WAY!


COUNT PERNON, YOU'VE GOT TO GET US TO OUR X-WINGS! MY PEOPLE ARE IN TROUBLE!!
YOUR COMRADES MUST HAVE COME ACROSS AN IMPERIAL PATROL LOOKING FOR PLB ENCAMPMENTS.
ARE THEY ALL RIGHT?


NOT IF WE DON'T GET TO OUR WINGS AND GIVE THEM SOME AIR SUPPORT.
NOT TO WORRY, CAPTAIN ANTILLES...


I SHALL HASTEN OUR PACE.

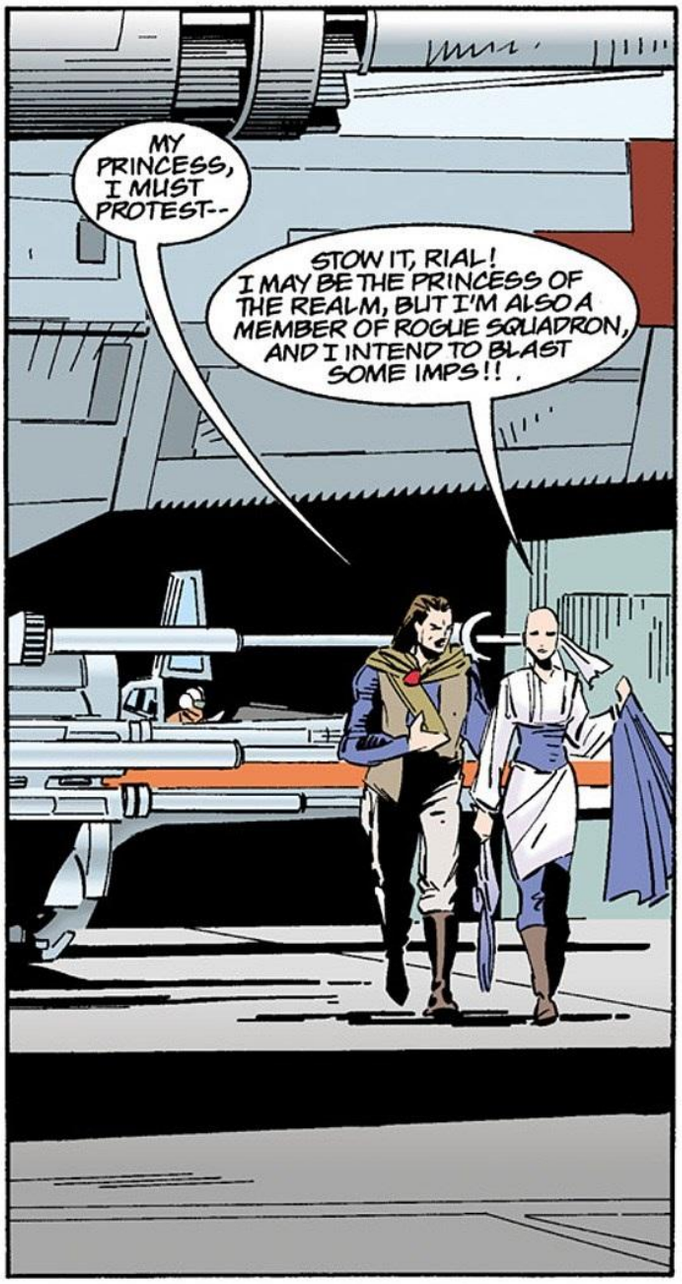

I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT! THESE EARS DON'T LIE! "WHY SO JUMPY", SHE SAYS!!

POOR NOBLE CREATURE, YOU WILL BE AVENGED!!
NRIN! WOULD YOU MIND TOO MUCH TRYING TO CONCENTRATE ON THE LIVING?!

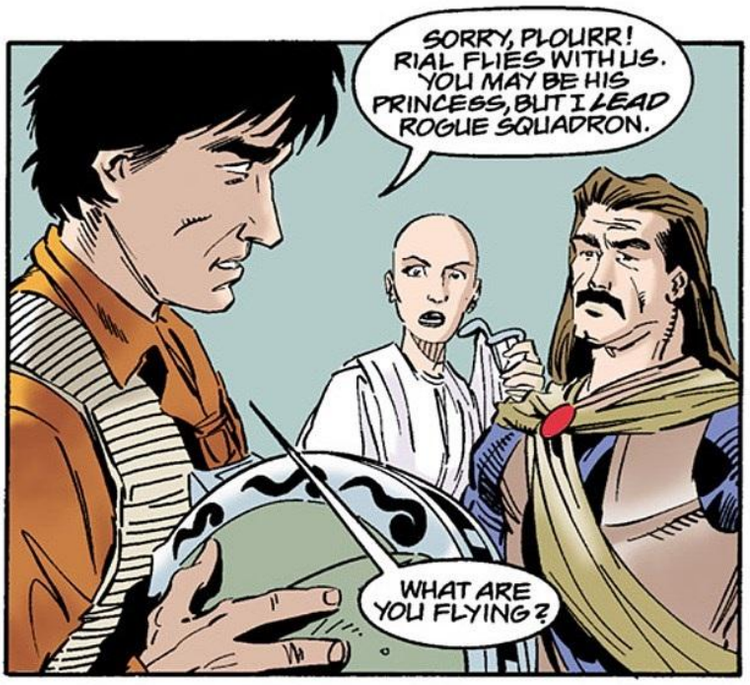
HELP IS ON THE WAY!
GOOD! WE SURE COULD USE SOME OF THAT FAMOUS AIR SUPPORT I'VE ALWAYS HEARD ABOUT!

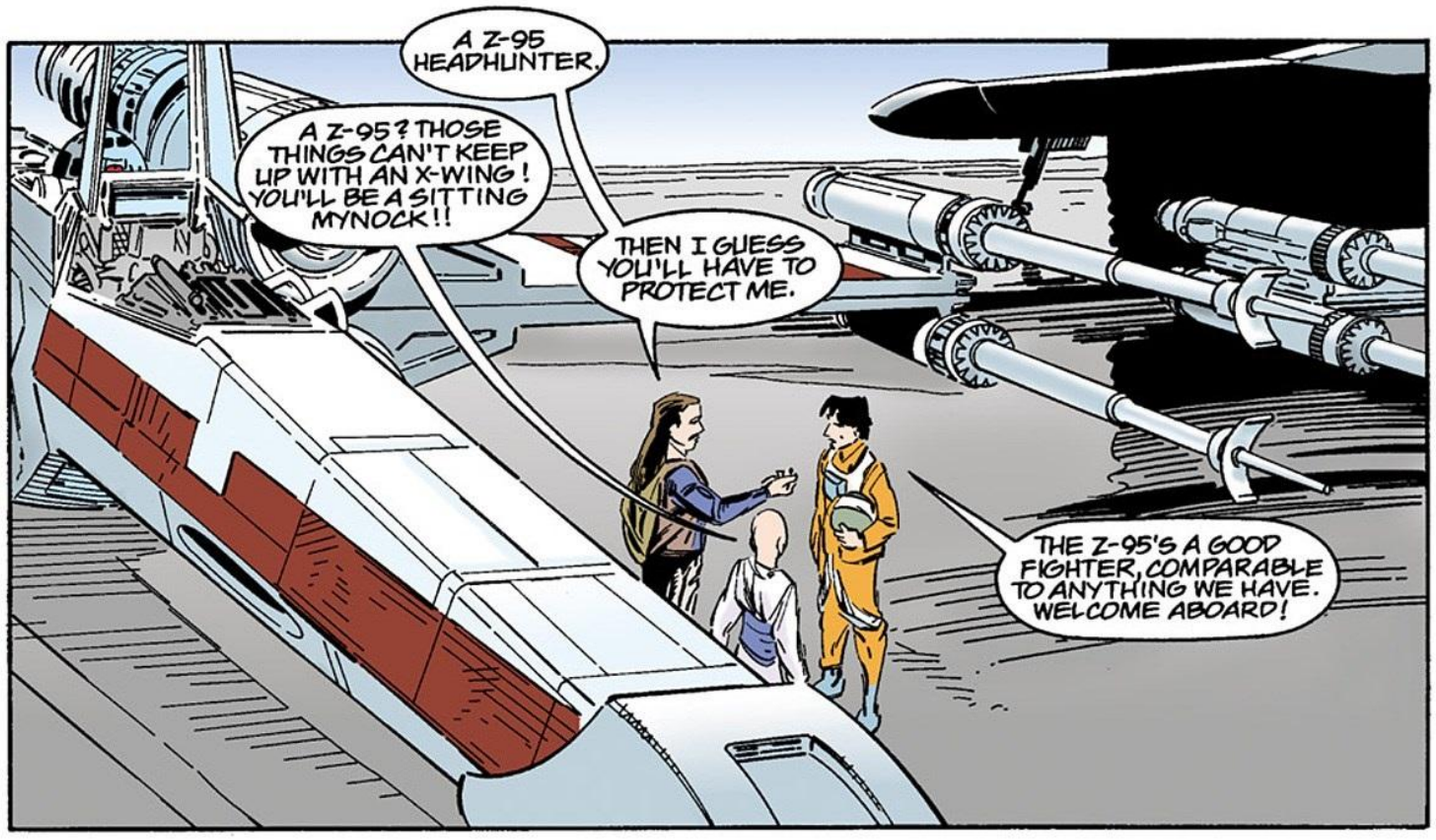
HOWRRRR!
CHOOM!
CHOOM!

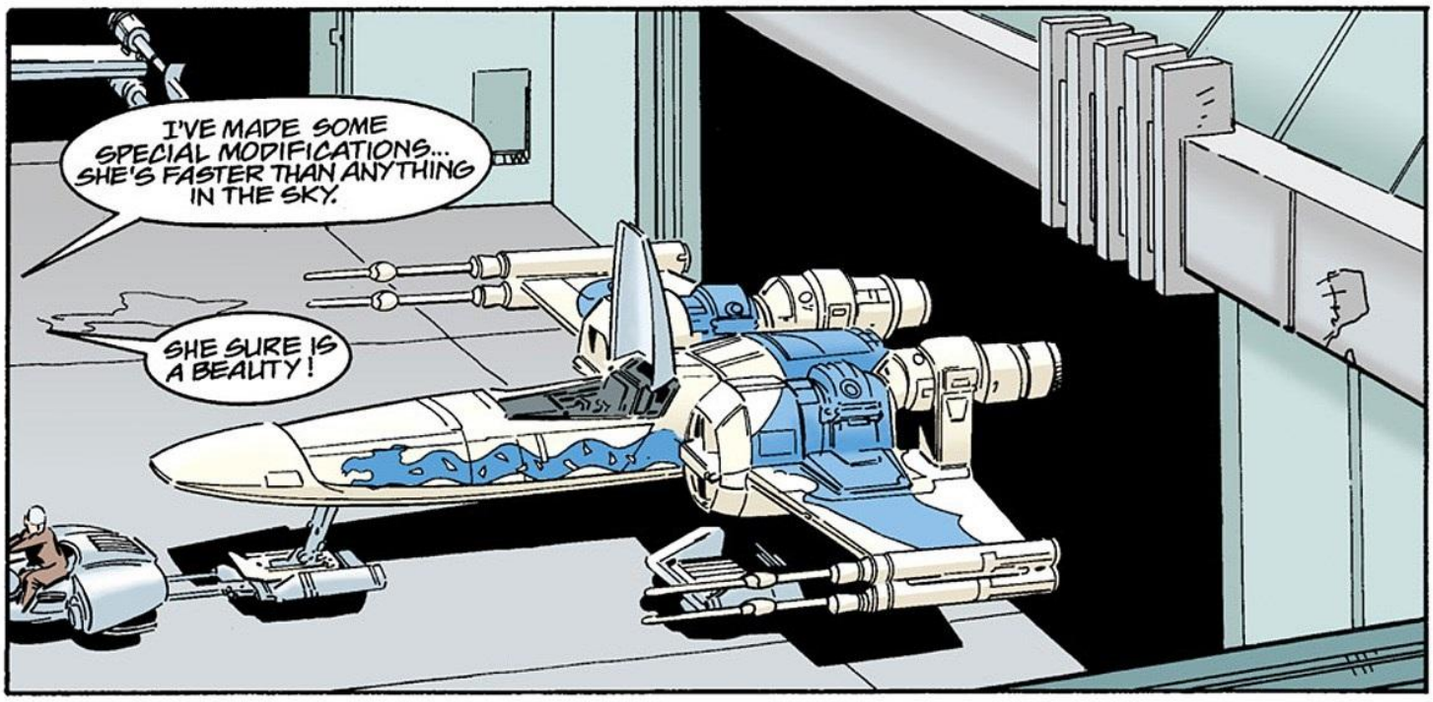
THOOOMM!
THAT WASN'T REALLY WHAT I HAD IN MIND...


MY PRINCESS, I MUST PROTEST--
STOW IT, RIAL! I MAY BE THE PRINCESS OF THE REALM, BUT I'M ALSO A MEMBER OF ROGUE SQUADRON, AND I INTEND TO BLAST SOME IMPS!!

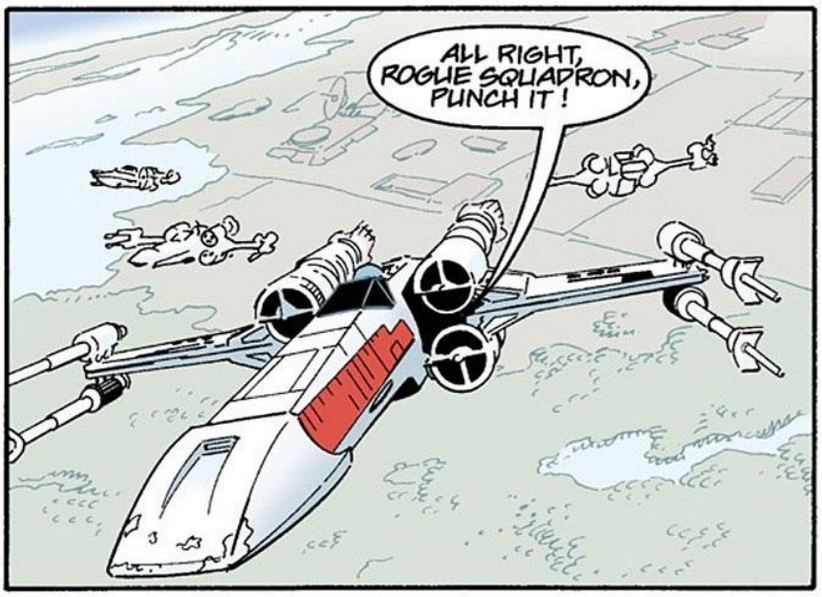
THEN I REQUEST TO JOIN THE ATTACK--
ABSOLUTELY NOT!


SORRY, PLOURR! RIAL FLIES WITH US. YOU MAY BE HIS PRINCESS, BUT I LEAD ROGUE SQUADRON.
WHAT ARE YOU FLYING?


A Z-95 HEADHUNTER.
A Z-95? THOSE THINGS CAN'T KEEP UP WITH AN X-WING! YOU'LL BE A SITTING MYNOCK!!
THEN I GUESS YOU'LL HAVE TO PROTECT ME.
THE Z-95'S A GOOD FIGHTER, COMPARABLE TO ANYTHING WE HAVE. WELCOME ABOARD!


I'VE MADE SOME SPECIAL MODIFICATIONS... SHE'S FASTER THAN ANYTHING IN THE SKY.
SHE SURE IS A BEAUTY!

WE FLY A STANDARD DELTA ATTACK PATTERN. JUST TAKE YOUR LEAD FROM PLOURR.


ALL RIGHT, ROGUE SQUADRON, PUNCH IT!

WHAT'RE THESE GUYS DOING HERE?!

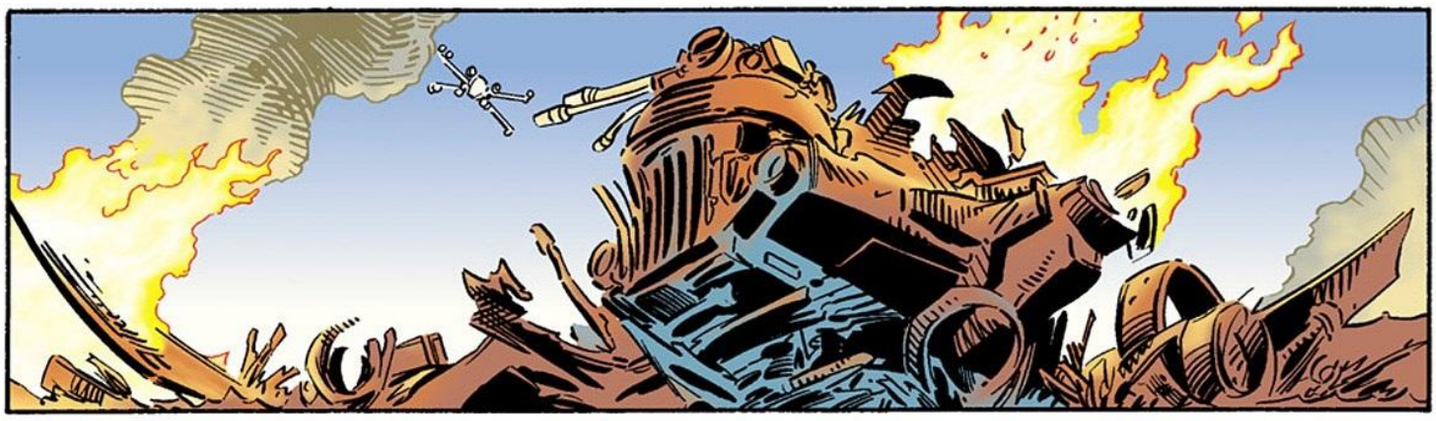
YHAAH!
WHPP!
NRIN!

NOW THEY'VE DONE IT!

COME ON, YOU IMP MUDWORMS! TAKE A SHOT AT ME!
NRIN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

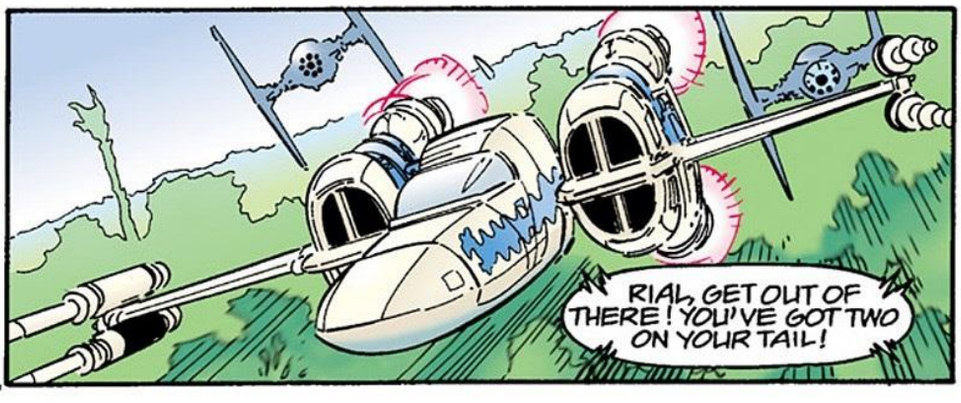
NERF-LICE! GARBAGE-HOUNDS!

WHOOOOM!

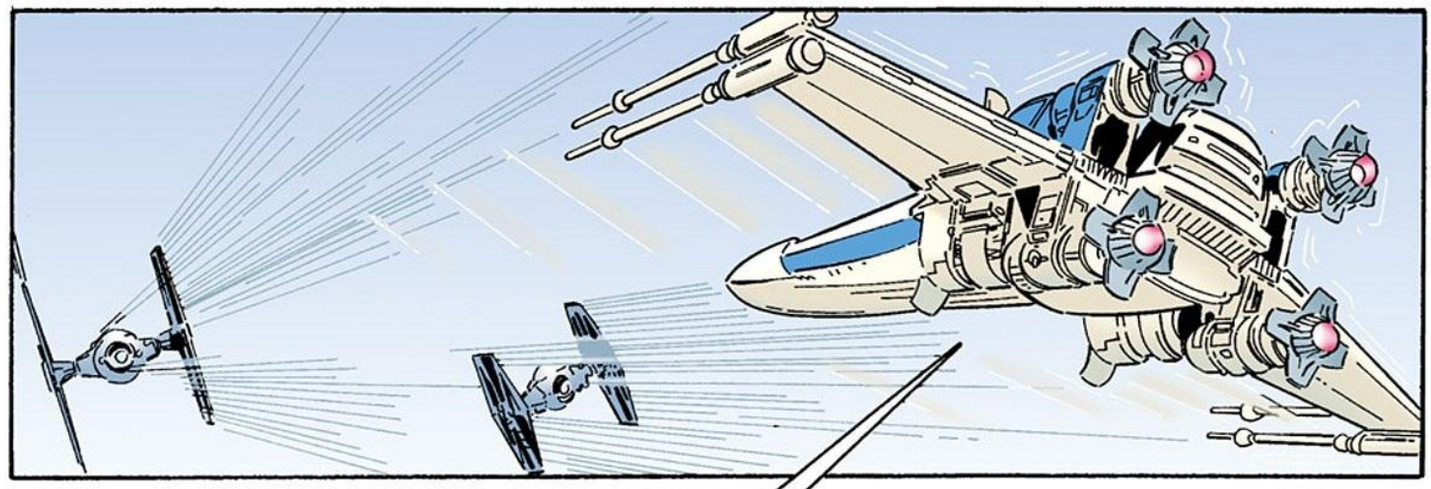


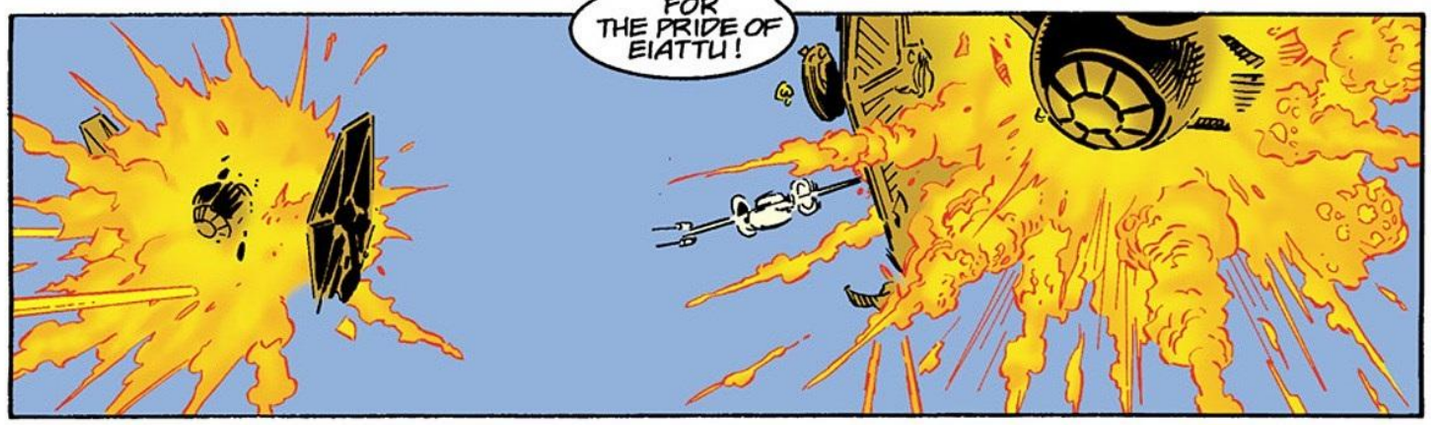
ANOTHER STUNT LIKE THAT, NRIN, AND YOU'LL BE GROUNDED 'TIL YOUR THIRD MOLTING!

NOW, GET SOME COVER!
YES SIR, CAPTAIN ANTILLES, SIR!!


RIAL, GET OUT OF THERE! YOU'VE GOT TWO ON YOUR TAIL!

NOT TO WORRY, MY PRINCESS. I HAVE THEM RIGHT WHERE I WANT THEM.




FOR THE PRIDE OF EIATTU!

WOW, WHOEVER'S IN THAT Z-95 SURE HAS GUTS TO PULL A SILERIAN STALL IN THAT CRATE.
WE GOTTA GET SOMEBODY ON THEIR FLANK, JANSON! WE'RE GETTING POUNDED--

LOOKS LIKE YOU GOT YOUR WISH, HOBBIE!!

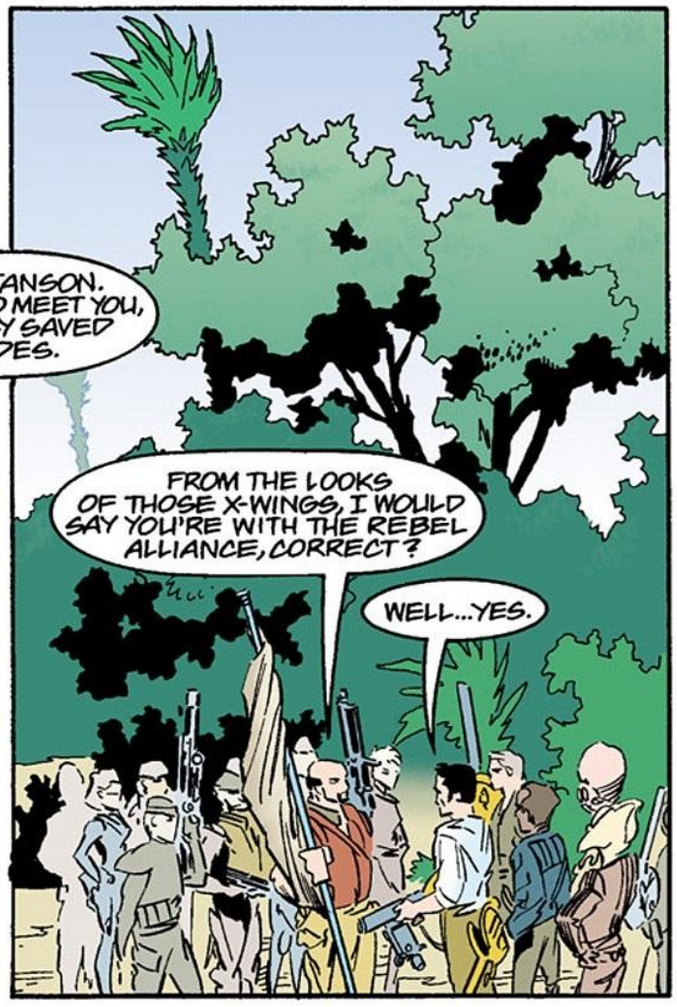
LIBERATION!!!

IT LOOKS LIKE THE IMPS ARE BREAKING OFF, PEOPLE!
JANSON, WE CAN'T LAND IN THAT MUCK. CAN YOU GUYS GET OUT ON YOUR OWN?

YEAH, THE IMPS ARE HEADING TO THE DEEP SWAMP. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET BACK ALL RIGHT.

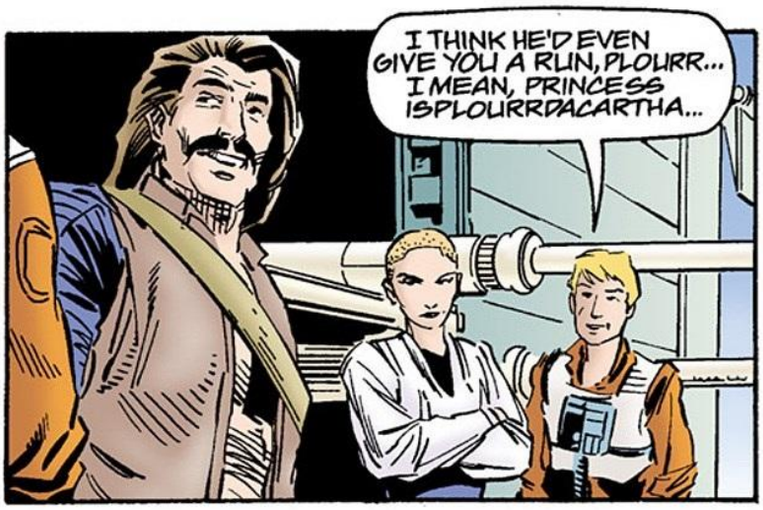
I THINK WE'VE GOT SOME PEOPLE TO THANK FIRST.

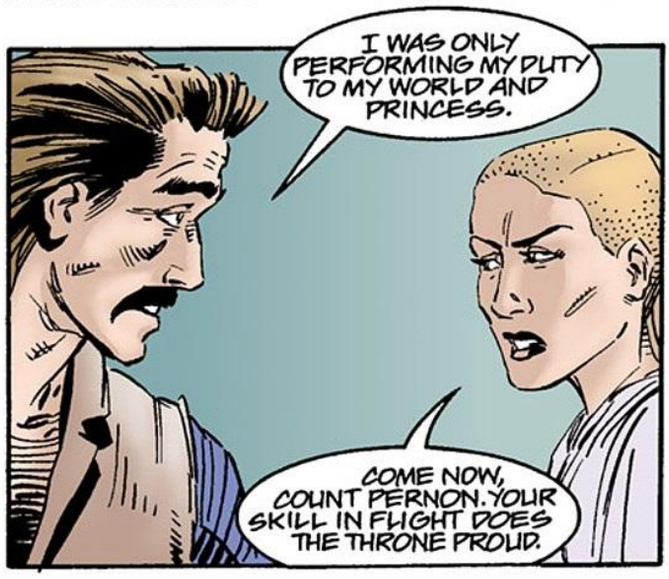
WELCOME. I AM SGT. ASHAAD OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION BATTALION.
LT. WES JANSON. PLEASED TO MEET YOU, YOU REALLY SAVED OUR HIDES.

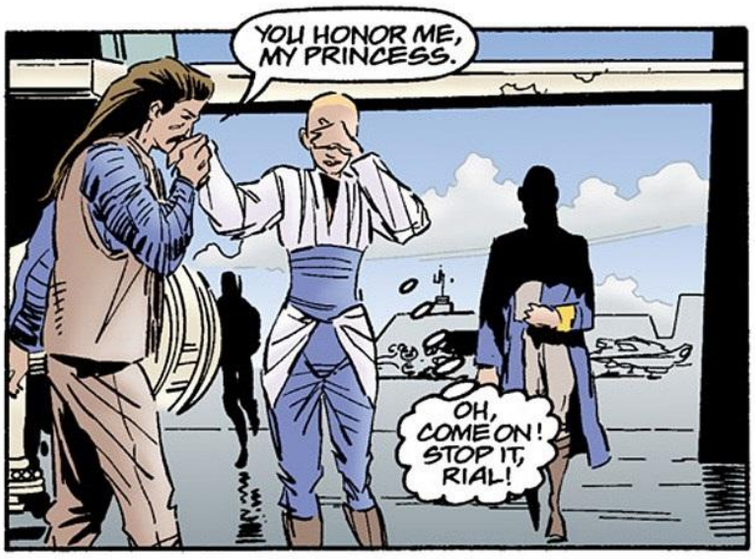

FROM THE LOOKS OF THOSE X-WINGS, I WOULD SAY YOU'RE WITH THE REBEL ALLIANCE, CORRECT?
WELL...YES.

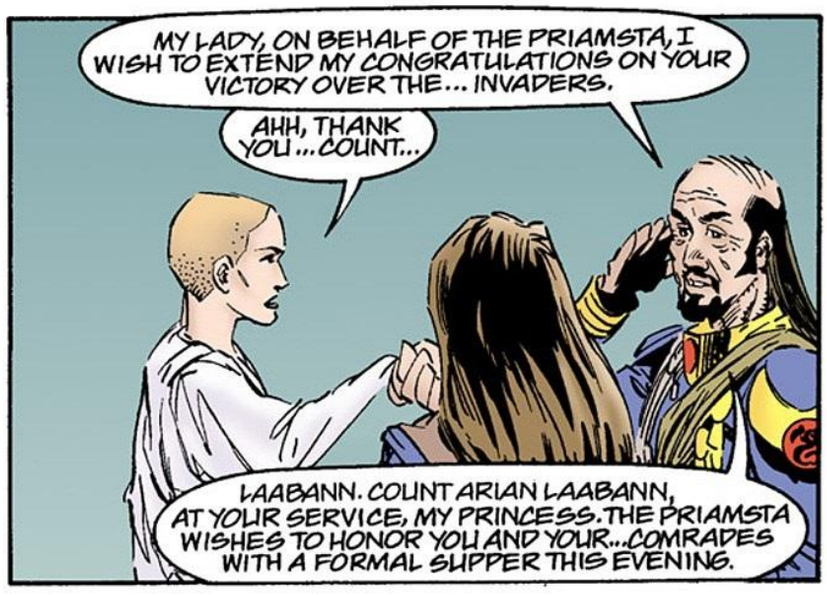
WONDERFUL, AN ENEMY OF THE EMPIRE IS AN ALLY OF OURS. COME, OUR CAMP IS NEARBY, MY COMMANDER WILL WISH TO HAVE A WORD WITH YOU.

THAT WAS SOME FLYING, COUNT PERNON! I THOUGHT THOSE EYEBALLS HAD YOU COLD.


I THINK HE'D EVEN GIVE YOU A RUN, PLOURR... I MEAN, PRINCESS ISPLOURRDACARTHA...


I WAS ONLY PERFORMING MY DUTY TO MY WORLD AND PRINCESS.
COME NOW, COUNT PERNON. YOUR SKILL IN FLIGHT DOES THE THRONE PROUD.


YOU HONOR ME, MY PRINCESS.
OH, COME ON! STOP IT, RIAL!


MY LADY, ON BEHALF OF THE PRIAMSTA, I WISH TO EXTEND MY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR VICTORY OVER THE... INVADERS.
AHH, THANK YOU... COUNT...
LAABANN. COUNT ARIAN LAABANN, AT YOUR SERVICE, MY PRINCESS. THE PRIAMSTA WISHES TO HONOR YOU AND YOUR... COMRADES WITH A FORMAL SUPPER THIS EVENING.

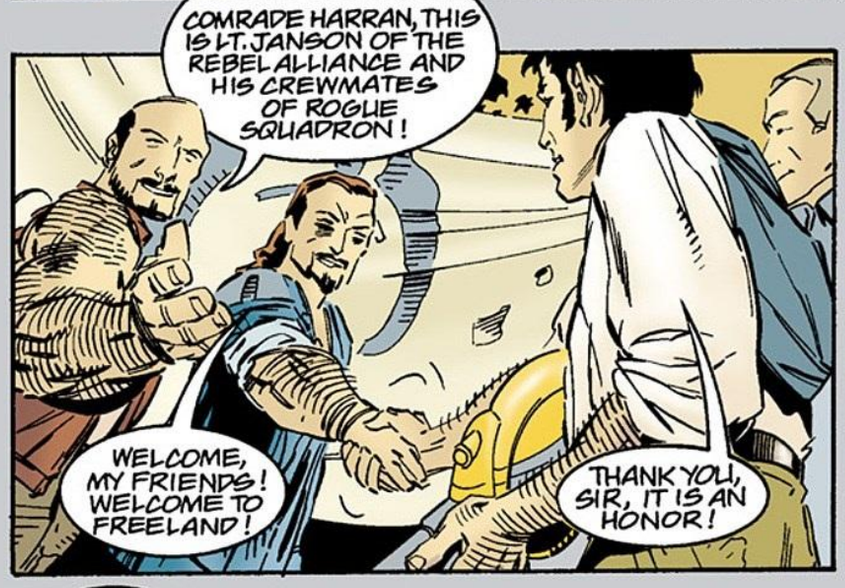
WE WOULD BE HONORED!

HERE WE ARE. YOU NOW STAND ON THE FREE SOIL OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION BATTALION!
...SOON, MY COMRADES, THERE WILL BE AN END TO WANT, AN END TO HUNGER OF BOTH THE BELLY AND THE SPIRIT!

SOON, COMRADES, WILL COME THE FALL OF THE NOBLES AND THEIR ALLIANCE WITH THE IMPERIALS. SOON ALL OF EIATTU WILL BE THE LAND OF FREE MEN!!

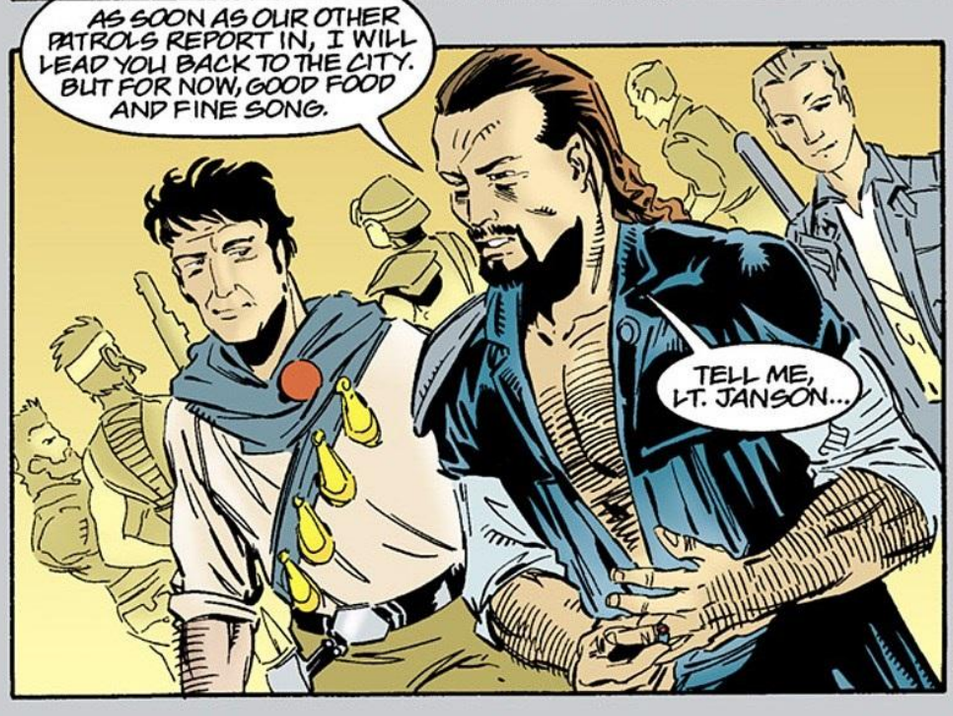
HARRAN! LIBERATION!
HARRAN!
LIBERATION!

COME, HARRAN WILL WANT TO MEET WITH YOU.

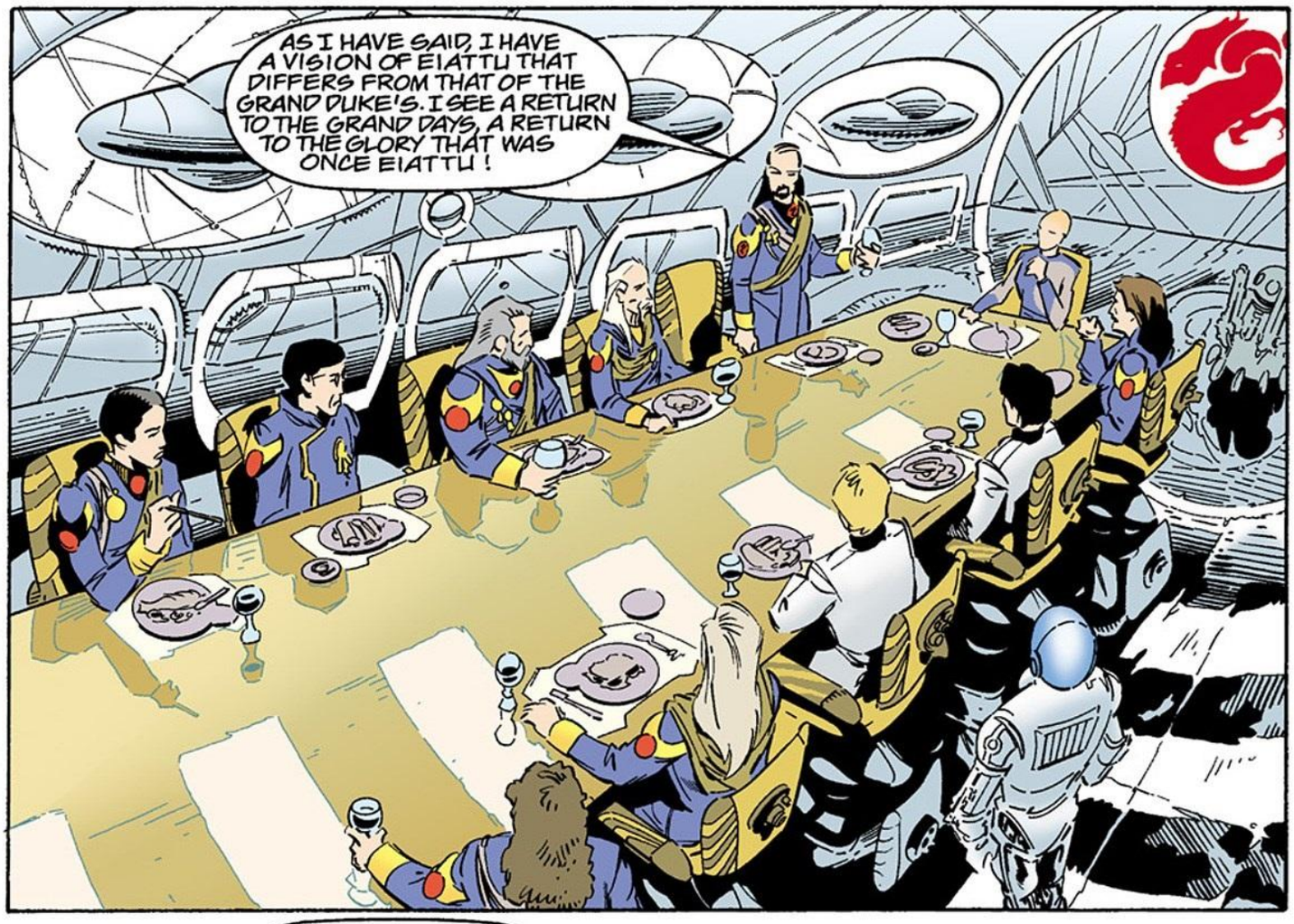

COMRADE HARRAN, THIS IS LT. JANSON OF THE REBEL ALLIANCE AND HIS CREWMATES OF ROGUE SQUADRON!
WELCOME, MY FRIENDS! WELCOME TO FREELAND!
THANK YOU, SIR, IT IS AN HONOR!

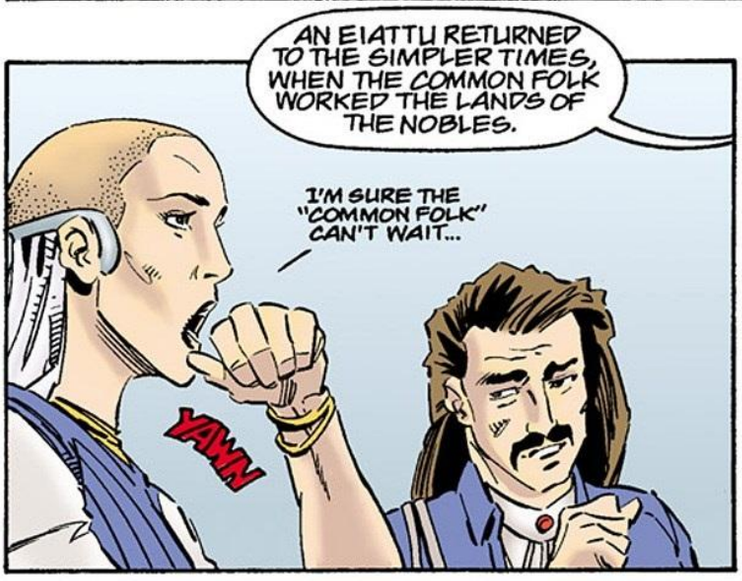
YOU ARE WELCOME TO EAT WITH US. WE HAVE PLENTY OF THE BEST FOOD, DRINK AND CREDITS THE EMPIRE HAS TO OFFER!

HE'S QUITE A LEADER.
A LEADER WITH BEAUTIFUL EYES!
HMMP.

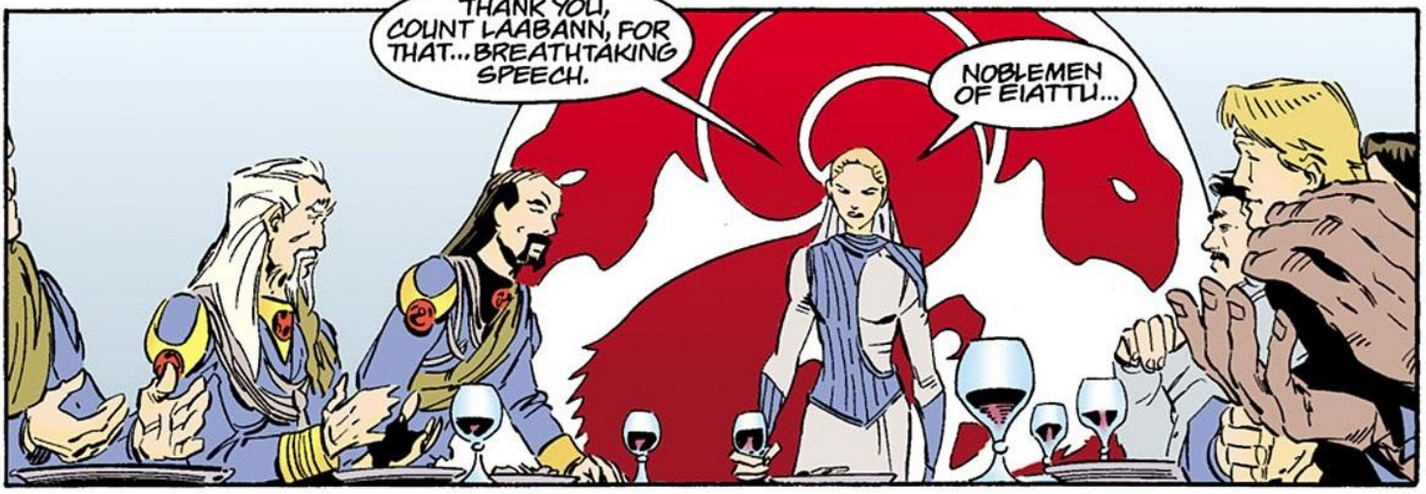

AS SOON AS OUR OTHER PATROLS REPORT IN, I WILL LEAD YOU BACK TO THE CITY. BUT FOR NOW, GOOD FOOD AND FINE SONG.
TELL ME, LT. JANSON...

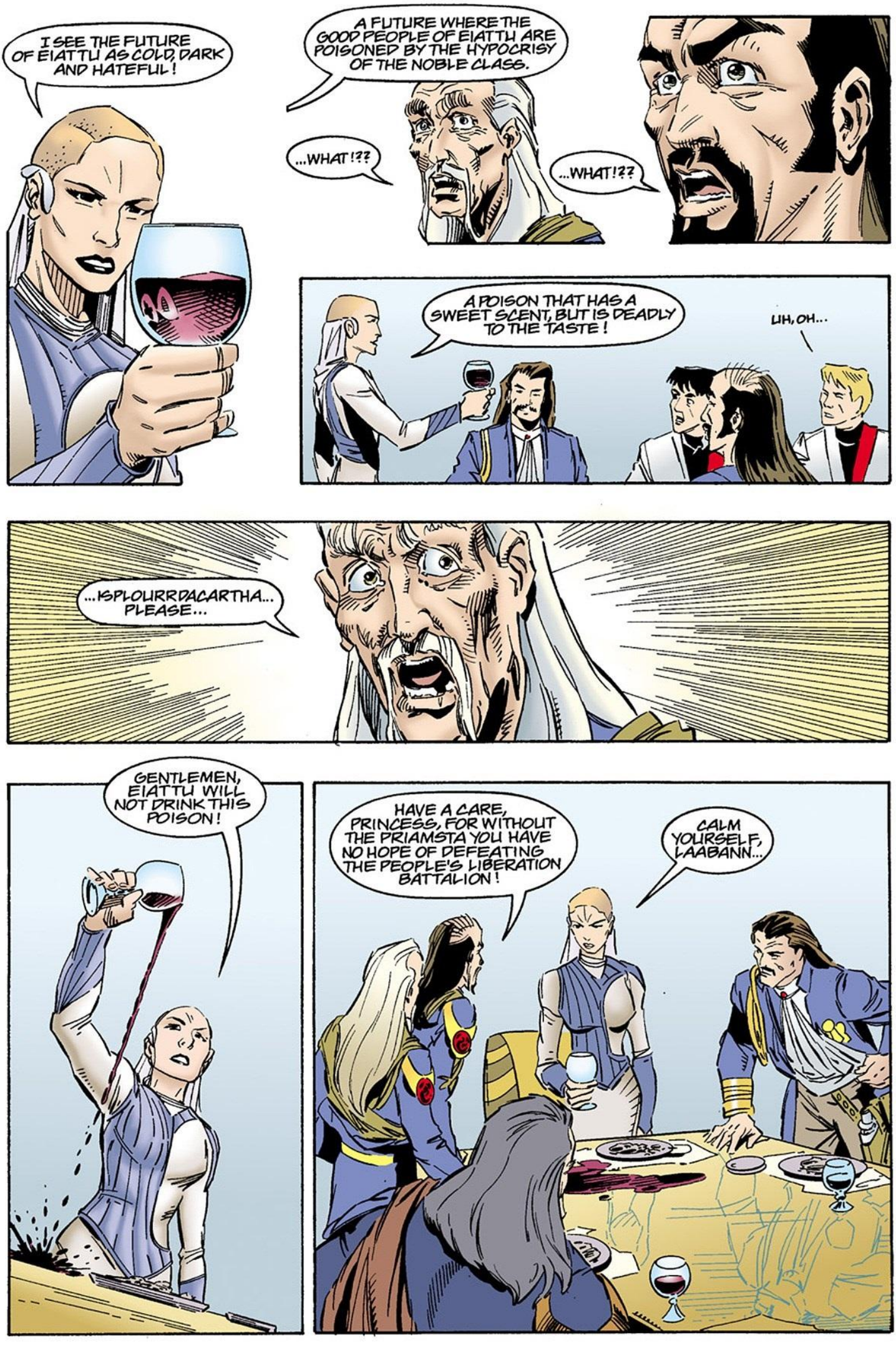
...WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME OF MY DARLING SISTER?


AS I HAVE SAID, I HAVE A VISION OF EIATTU THAT DIFFERS FROM THAT OF THE GRAND DUKE'S. I SEE A RETURN TO THE GRAND DAYS, A RETURN TO THE GLORY THAT WAS ONCE EIATTU!


AN EIATTU RETURNED TO THE SIMPLER TIMES, WHEN THE COMMON FOLK WORKED THE LANDS OF THE NOBLES.
I'M SURE THE "COMMON FOLK" CAN'T WAIT...
YAWN

HOW I LONG FOR THE DAYS OF OUR FATHERS, WHEN THE SIMPLE FOLK OF EIATTU KNEW THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THEY LIVED.


THANK YOU, COUNT LAABANN, FOR THAT... BREATHTAKING SPEECH.
NOBLEMEN OF EIATTU...


I SEE THE FUTURE OF EIATTU AS COLD, DARK AND HATEFUL!
A FUTURE WHERE THE GOOD PEOPLE OF EIATTU ARE POISONED BY THE HYPOCRISY OF THE NOBLE CLASS.
...WHAT!??
...WHAT!??
A POISON THAT HAS A SWEET SCENT, BUT IS DEADLY TO THE TASTE!
UH, OH...
...ISPLOURRDACARTHA... PLEASE...
GENTLEMEN, EIATTU WILL NOT DRINK THIS POISON!
HAVE A CARE, PRINCESS, FOR WITHOUT THE PRIAMSTA YOU HAVE NO HOPE OF DEFEATING THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION BATTALION!
CALM YOURSELF, LAABANN...

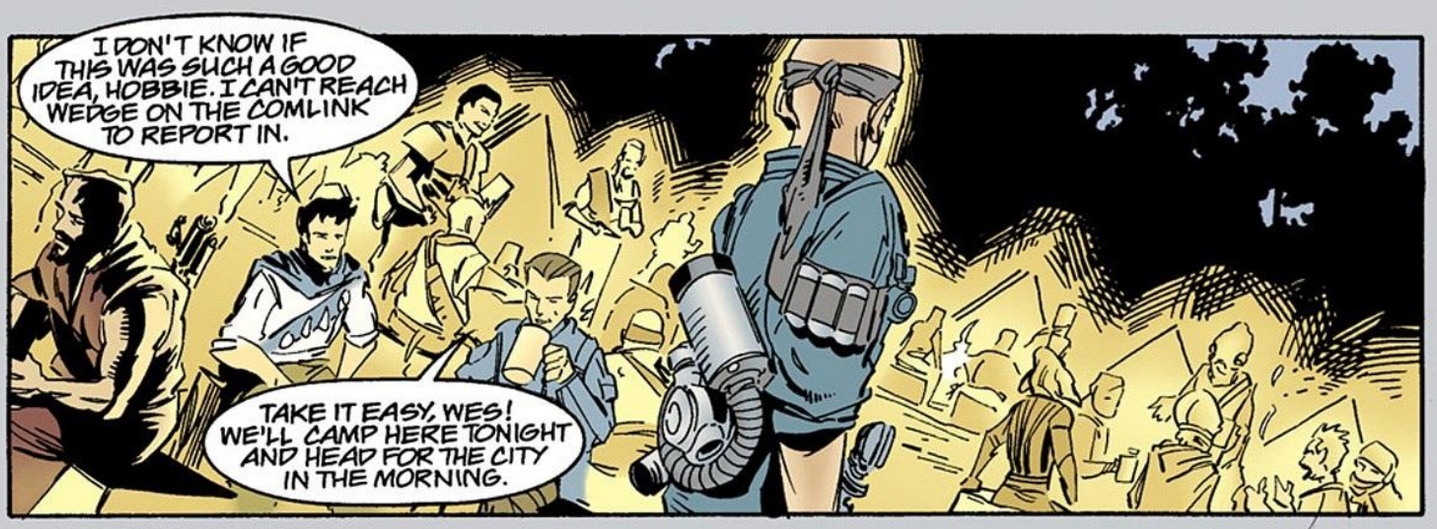
THE TYRANNY OF THE NOBLES IS AT AN END, LAABANN. I WILL SEE TO THAT. IF YOU WISH A PLACE IN THE FUTURE OF EIATTU, EITHER STAND WITH THE THRONE...

...OR FALL.

tinkle
KRESH
tinkle

THE CHOICE IS YOURS.
STAND... OR FALL...

WELL... THAT COULD HAVE GONE BETTER.


I DON'T KNOW IF THIS WAS SUCH A GOOD IDEA, HOBBIE. I CAN'T REACH WEDGE ON THE COMLINK TO REPORT IN.
TAKE IT EASY, WES! WE'LL CAMP HERE TONIGHT AND HEAD FOR THE CITY IN THE MORNING.

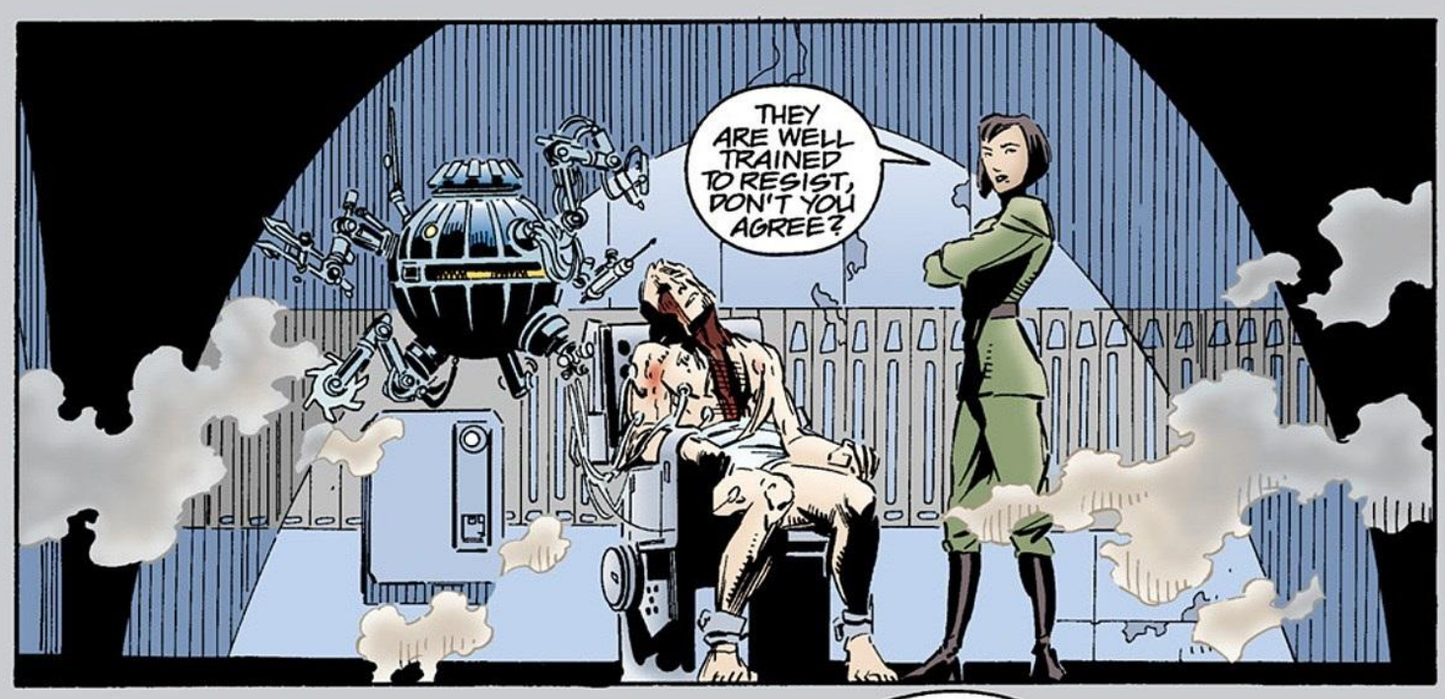
BESIDES, WE CAME OUT HERE FOR SOME R AND R, AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GETTING, RIGHT?
YEAH, AT EASE, WES! ROGUE SQUADRON NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD. I'M SURE WEDGE AND TYCHO ARE HAVING A FINE TIME SLEEPING IN THE PALACE!

SGT. ASHAAD, WILL HARRAN BE JOINING US FOR A DRINK?
OUR GREAT LEADER HAS GONE ON RECONNAISSANCE. HE SHOULD RETURN BY DAYBREAK TO LEAD YOU BACK TO THE CITY.

SEE, WE'LL LEAVE BY FIRST LIGHT! HAVE A DRINK!
OKAY. I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.

TO THE GOOD LIFE!

YAAAAAHHHH!!!


THEY ARE WELL TRAINED TO RESIST, DON'T YOU AGREE?

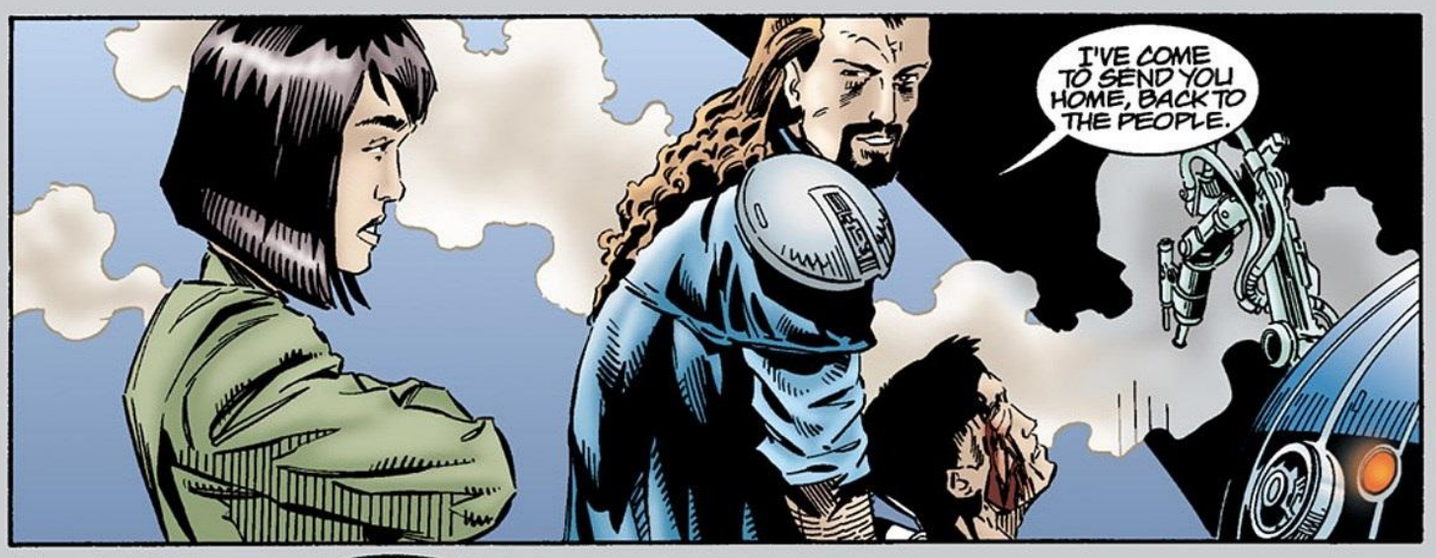
IT IS EASY TO RESIST WHEN YOU BELIEVE IN YOUR CAUSE AND KNOW NOTHING OF INTEREST.

A TRIBUTE TO THE MAN WHO INSPIRES AND CONTROLS THEM.
NEHH... OORG...

WHY, THANK YOU. YOU FLATTER ME.

...H--HARRAN!! YOU'VE COME FOR ME!

COMRADE... I TOLD THEM NOTHING... I DID NOT BETRAY THE CAUSE...
Shhh... I KNOW. I KNOW. YOU HAVE DONE WELL, COMRADE.

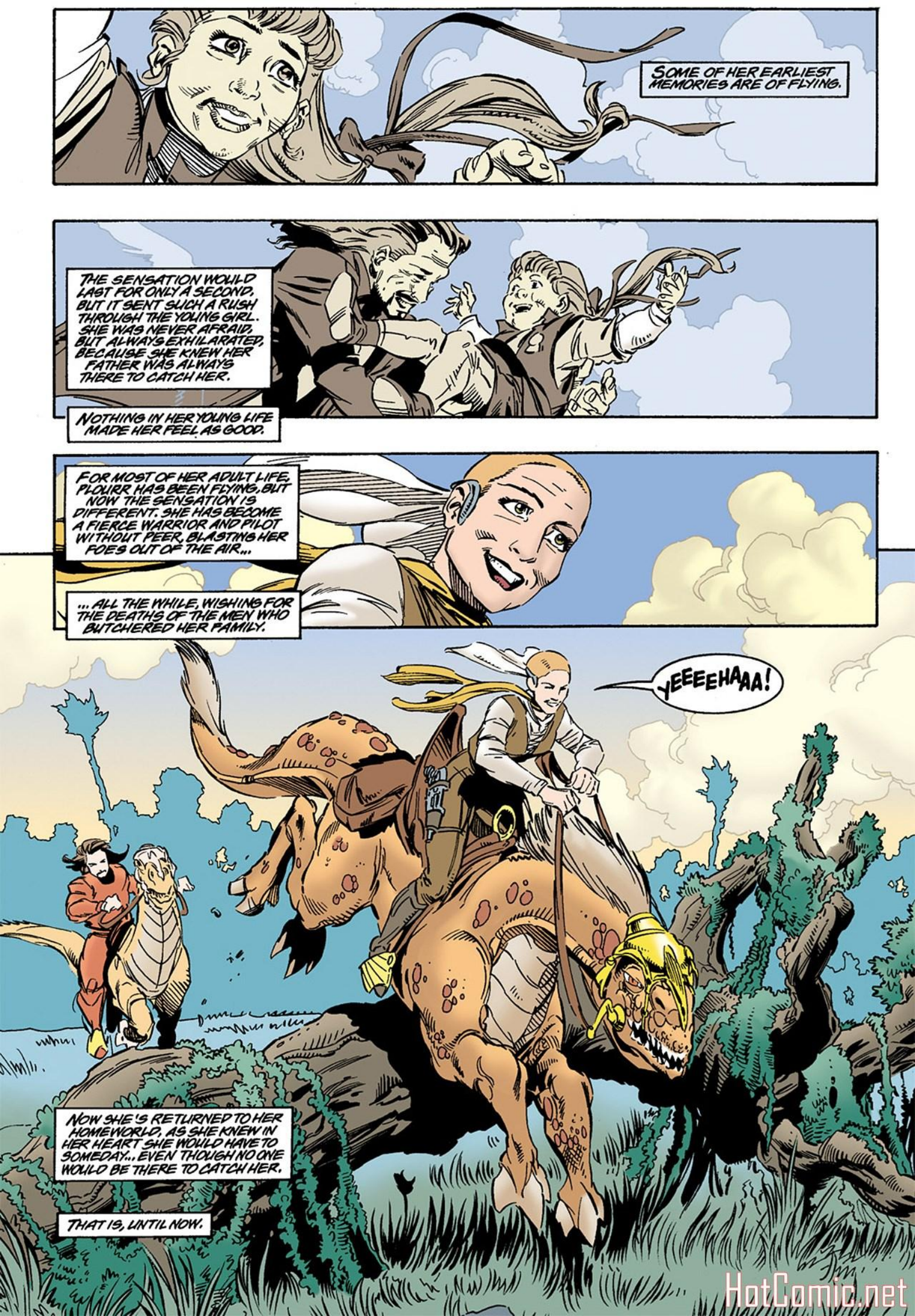

I'VE COME TO SEND YOU HOME, BACK TO THE PEOPLE.

JUST RELAX, COMRADE. I AM GOING TO SET YOU FREE.

YOU ARE FREE, COMRADE.
KRAAAAK

I DO LOVE A MAN WHO ENJOYS WORKING WITH HIS HANDS.
IF ONE IS TO RULE, ONE MUST NOT SHY FROM DIFFICULT DUTY.

THEN, SOON YOU SHALL RULE EIATTU, MY LOVE. AND THEN, NO ONE, NOT MY EMPIRE, THE ALLIANCE, THE PRIAMSTA, OR YOUR SISTER CAN STOP US.



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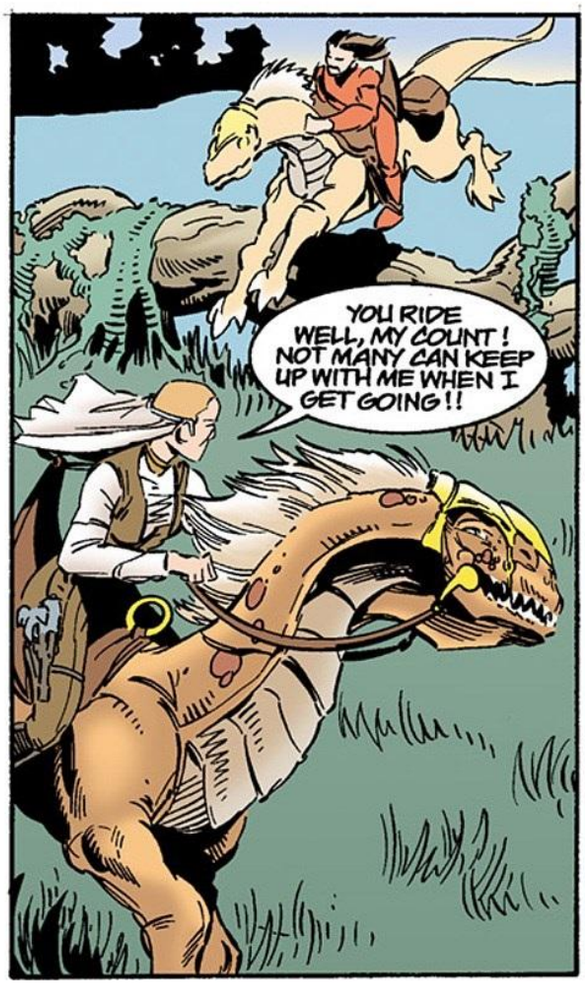
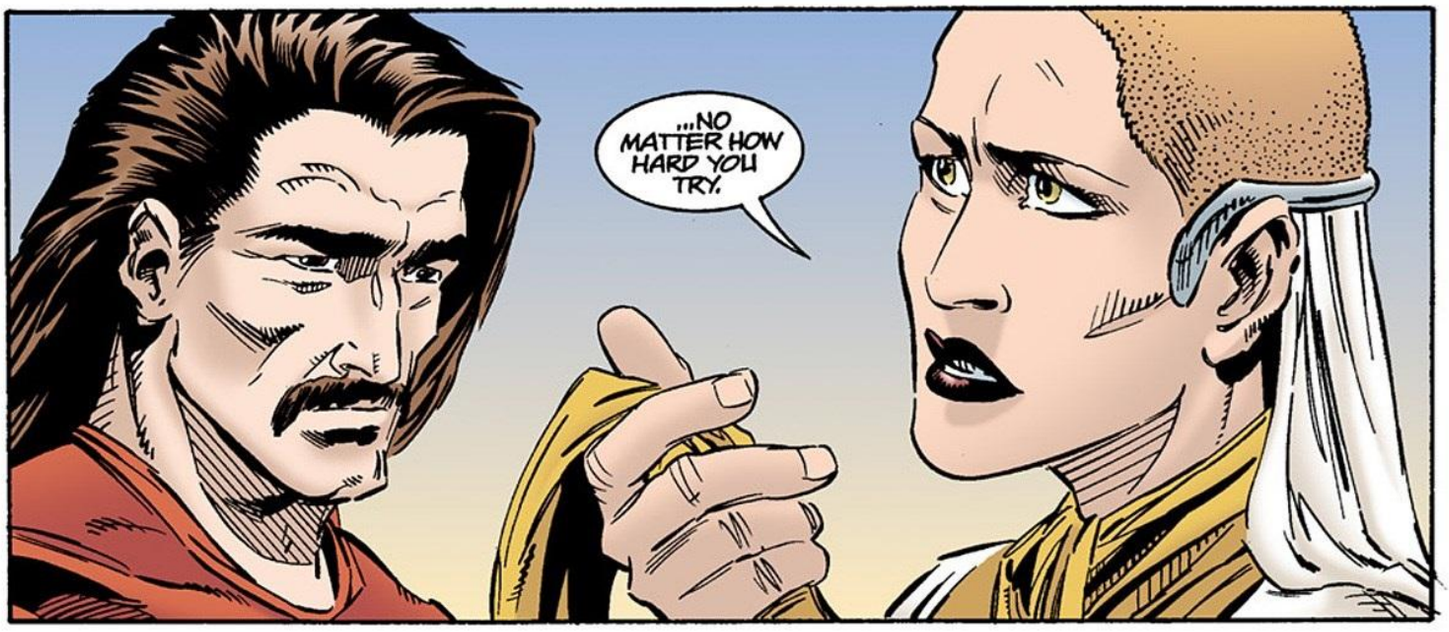
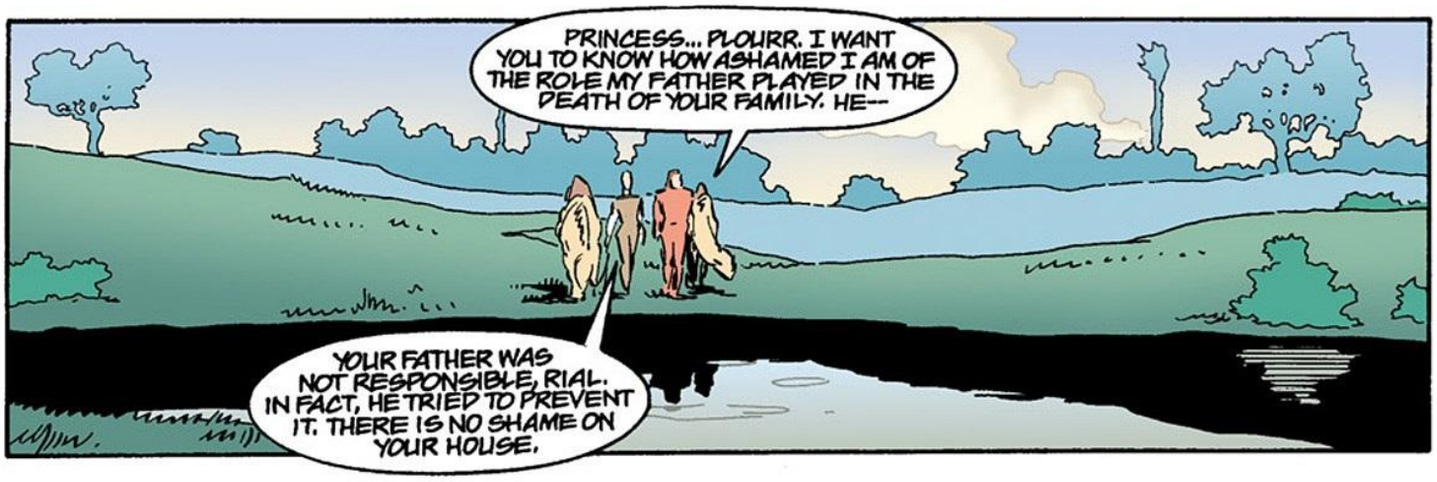
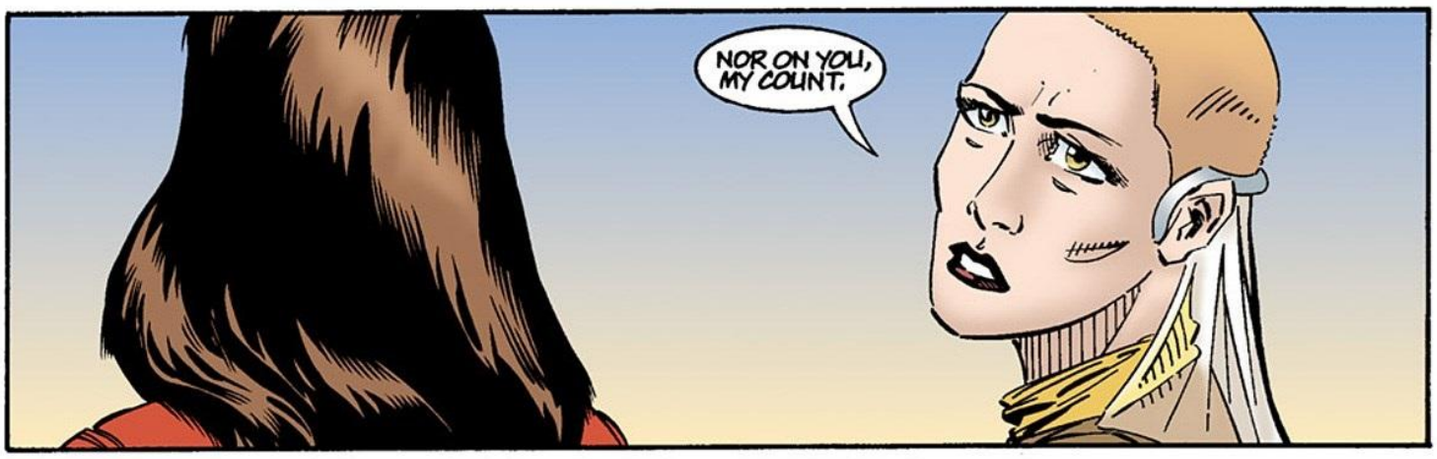

YOU RIDE WELL, MY COUNT! NOT MANY CAN KEEP UP WITH ME WHEN I GET GOING!!

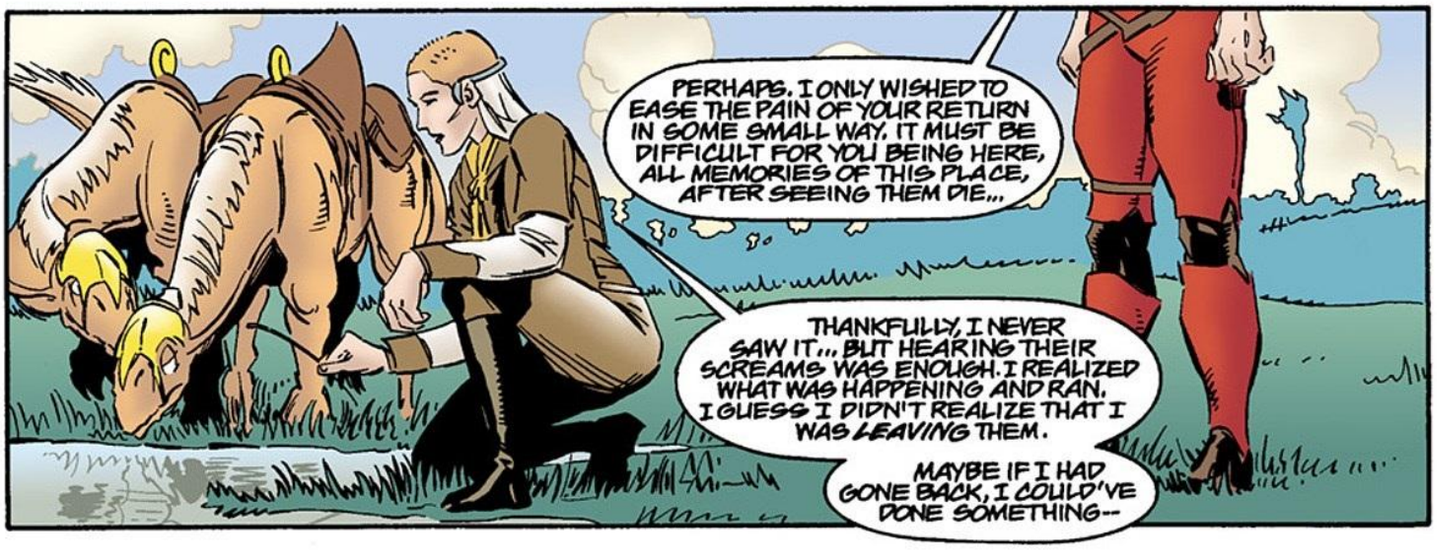
SO I SEE! I WOULD NOT HAVE THOUGHT THAK-RIDING TO BE A REQUIREMENT OF ALLIANCE FLIGHT TRAINING!

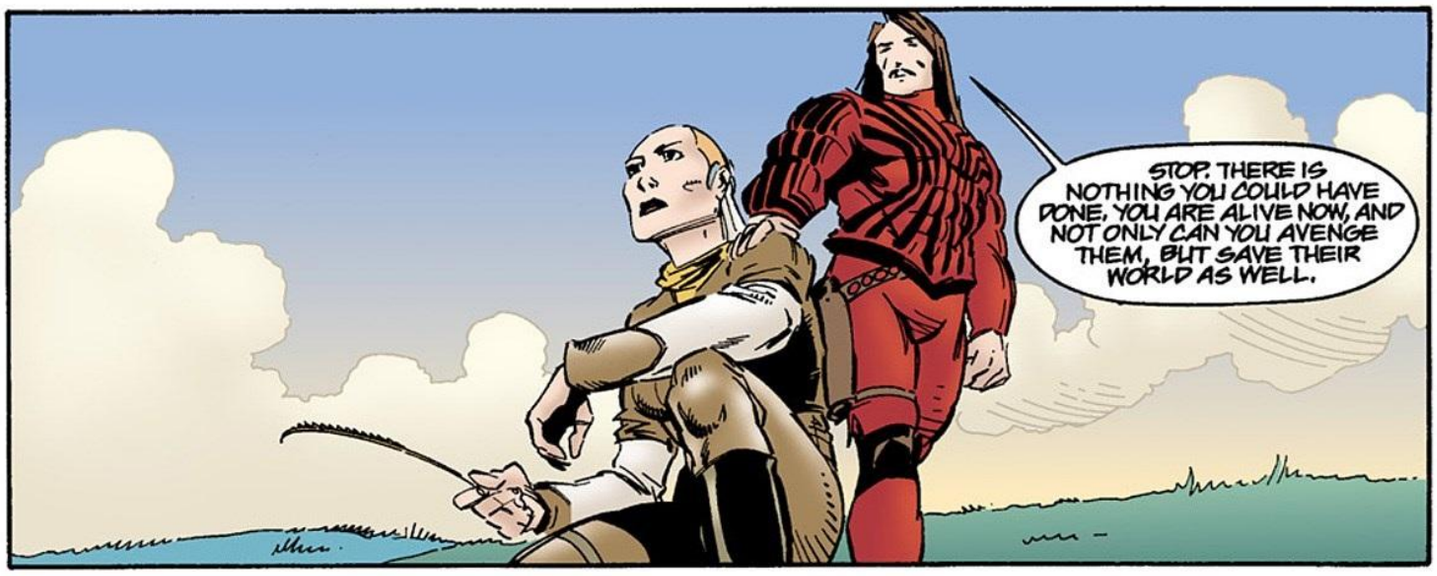
IT'S NOT, IN FACT, I HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN A THAK SINCE I WAS A CHILD.
BUT... I GUESS SOME THINGS YOU JUST DON'T FORGET...

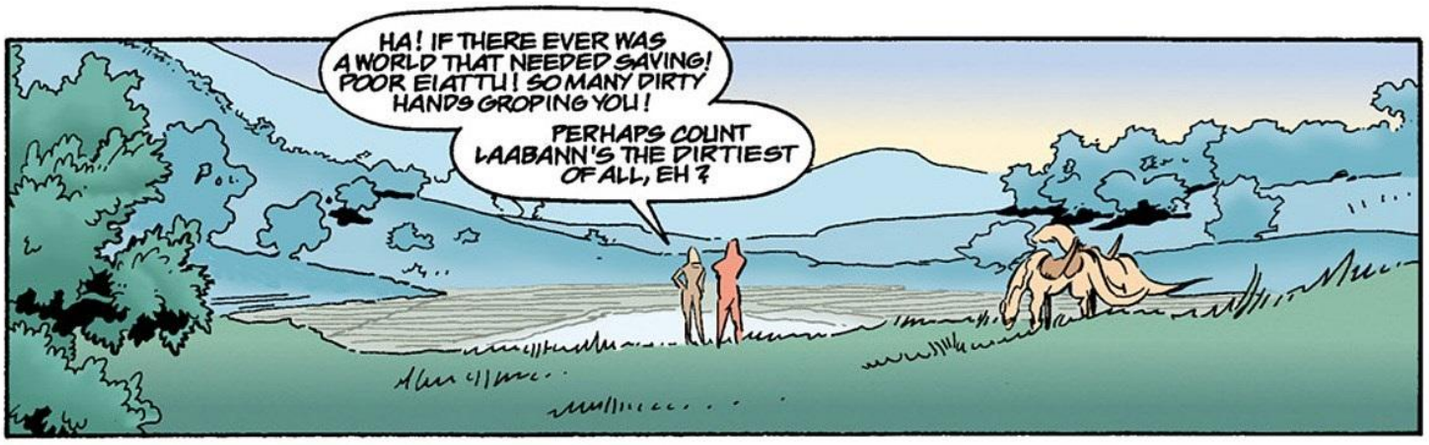

...NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY.

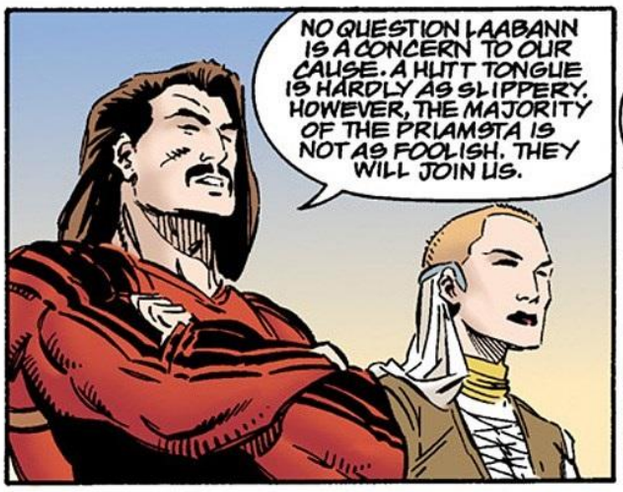

PRINCESS... PLOURR. I WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW ASHAMED I AM OF THE ROLE MY FATHER PLAYED IN THE DEATH OF YOUR FAMILY. HE--
YOUR FATHER WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE, RIAL. IN FACT, HE TRIED TO PREVENT IT. THERE IS NO SHAME ON YOUR HOUSE.


NOR ON YOU, MY COUNT.

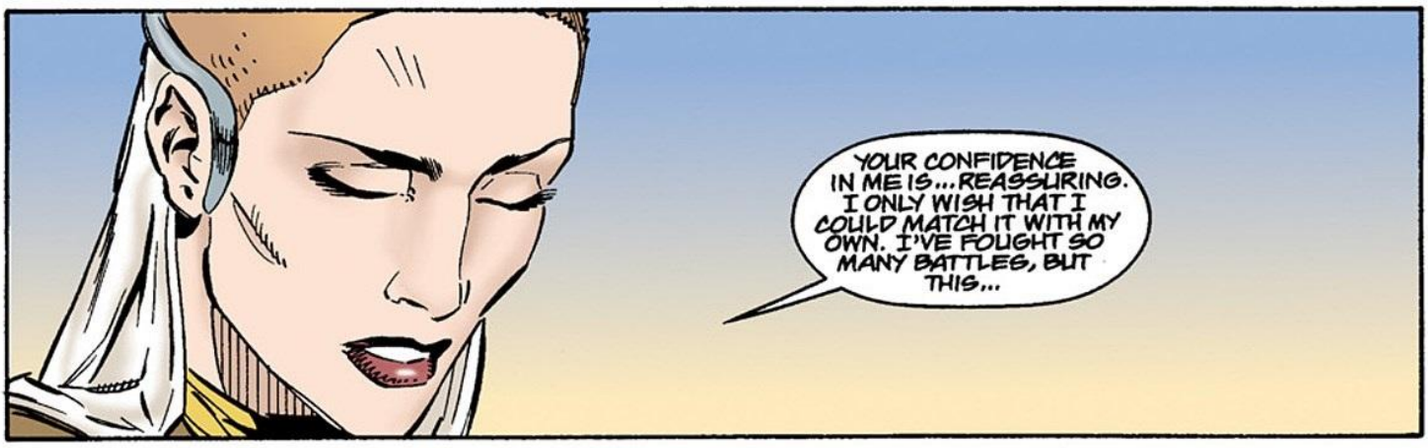

PERHAPS. I ONLY WISHED TO EASE THE PAIN OF YOUR RETURN IN SOME SMALL WAY. IT MUST BE DIFFICULT FOR YOU BEING HERE, ALL MEMORIES OF THIS PLACE, AFTER SEEING THEM DIE...
THANKFULLY, I NEVER SAW IT... BUT HEARING THEIR SCREAMS WAS ENOUGH. I REALIZED WHAT WAS HAPPENING AND RAN. I GUESS I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT I WAS LEAVING THEM.
MAYBE IF I HAD GONE BACK, I COULD'VE DONE SOMETHING--

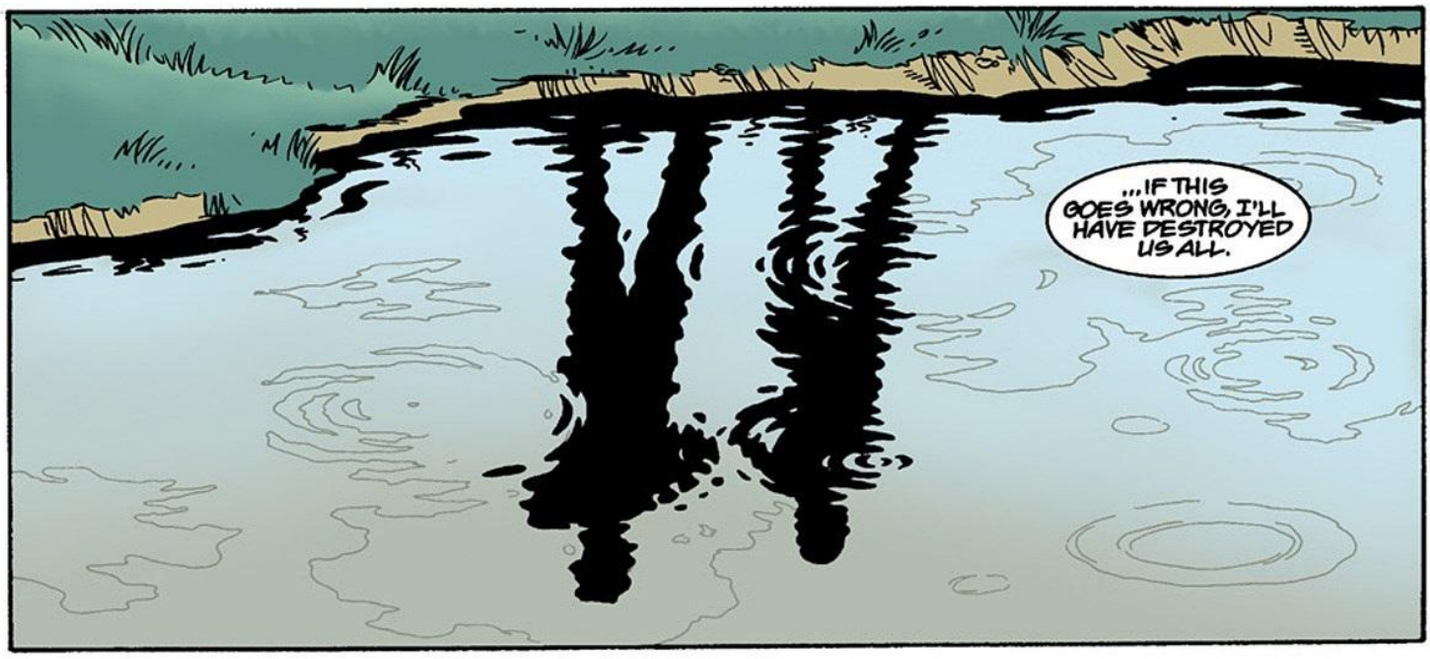

STOP. THERE IS NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE. YOU ARE ALIVE NOW, AND NOT ONLY CAN YOU AVENGE THEM, BUT SAVE THEIR WORLD AS WELL.

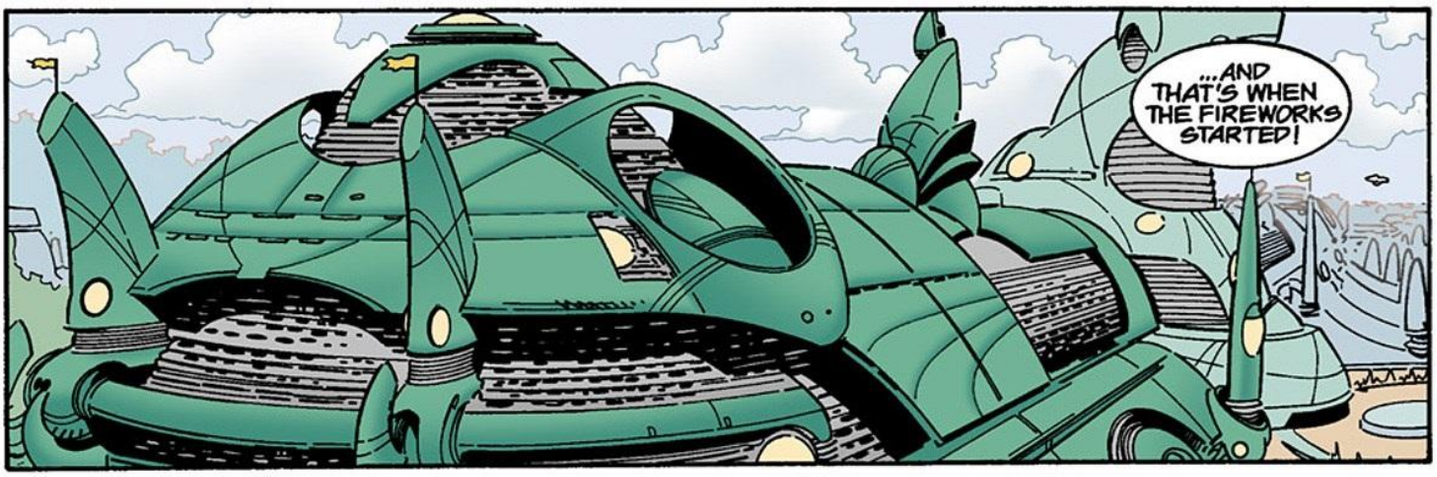

HA! IF THERE EVER WAS A WORLD THAT NEEDED SAVING! POOR ELATTU! SO MANY DIRTY HANDS GROPING YOU!
PERHAPS COUNT LAABANN'S THE DIRTIEST OF ALL, EH?


NO QUESTION LAABANN IS A CONCERN TO OUR CAUSE. A HUTT TONGUE IS HARDLY AS SLIPPERY. HOWEVER, THE MAJORITY OF THE PRIAMSTA IS NOT AS FOOLISH. THEY WILL JOIN US.

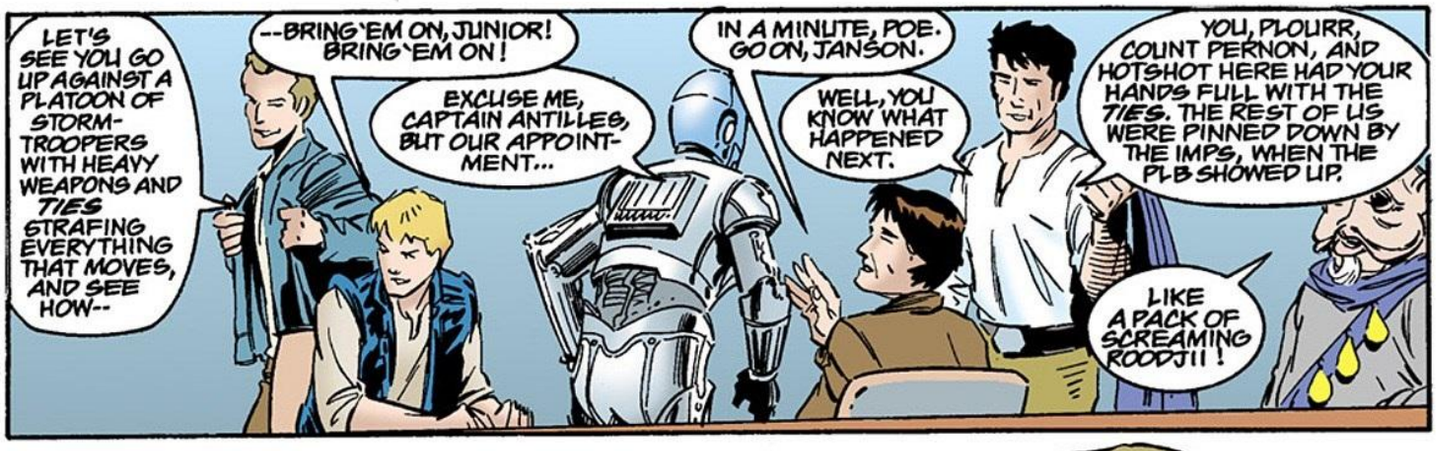
AND WITH YOU LEADING US, WE WILL SURELY WIN THE DAY. I ONLY ASK THAT YOU ALLOW ME TO BE AT YOUR SIDE FROM NOW UNTIL THAT DAY COMES.


YOUR CONFIDENCE IN ME IS... REASSURING. I ONLY WISH THAT I COULD MATCH IT WITH MY OWN. I'VE FOUGHT SO MANY BATTLES, BUT THIS...

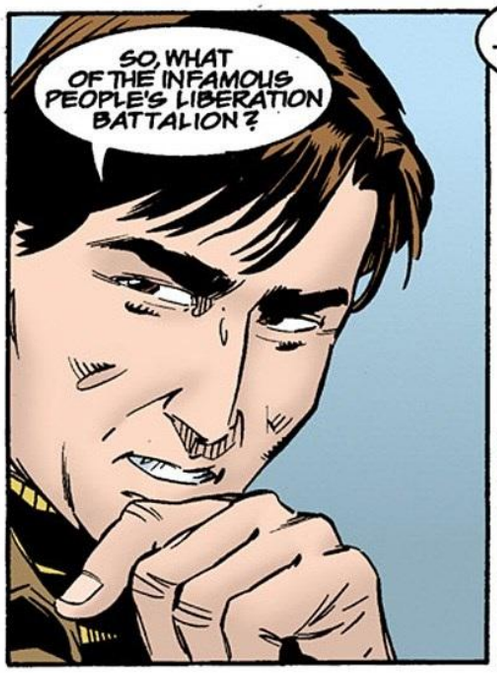

...IF THIS GOES WRONG, I'LL HAVE DESTROYED US ALL.


...AND THAT'S WHEN THE FIREWORKS STARTED!

THE IMPS MUST'VE LOST THE PLB IN THE SWAMPS, SO WHEN THEY SAW US WALKING UP, THEY STARTED BLASTING!
AND THAT'S WHEN YOU CALLED US.
--TO SAVE YOUR BUTTS!


LET'S SEE YOU GO UP AGAINST A PLATOON OF STORM-TROOPERS WITH HEAVY WEAPONS AND TIES STRAFING EVERYTHING THAT MOVES, AND SEE HOW--
--BRING 'EM ON, JUNIOR! BRING 'EM ON!
EXCUSE ME, CAPTAIN ANTILLES, BUT OUR APPOINT-MENT...
IN A MINUTE, POE. GO ON, JANSON.
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.
YOU, PLOURR, COUNT PERNON, AND HOTSHOT HERE HAD YOUR HANDS FULL WITH THE TIES. THE REST OF US WERE PINNED DOWN BY THE IMPS, WHEN THE PLB SHOWED UP.
LIKE A PACK OF SCREAMING ROODJI!!

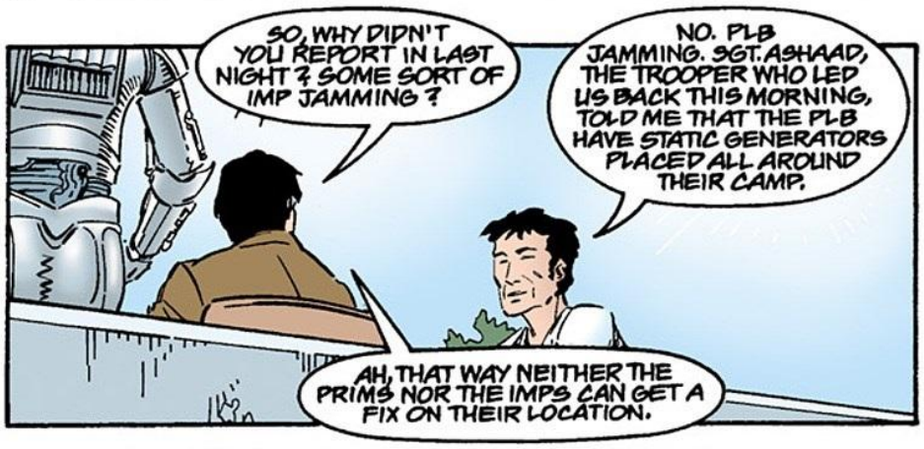
THE NEXT THING WE KNEW, THE IMPS WERE ON THE RUN.
YEAH, IT WAS LIKE THEY REALIZED THEY SUDDENLY HAD SOMETHING SAFER TO DO!

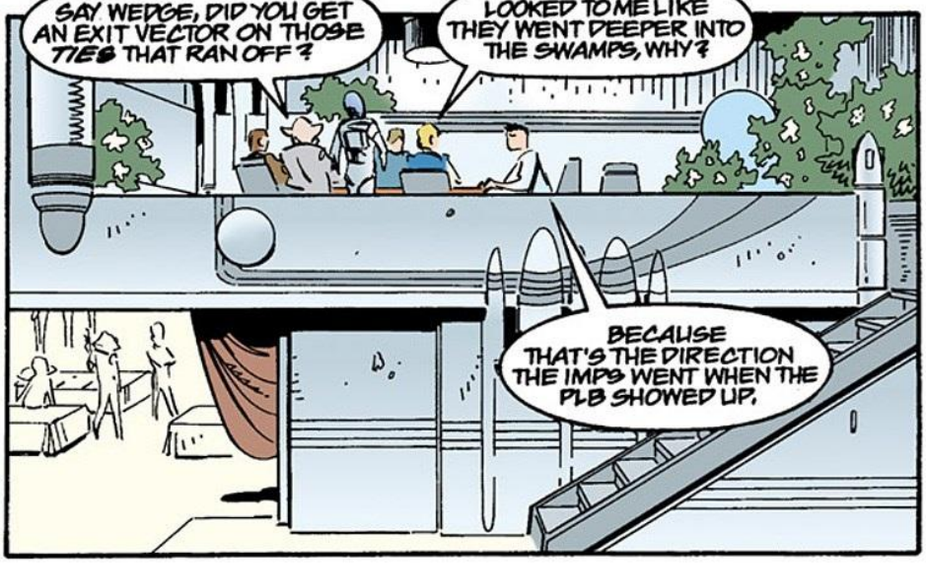

SO, WHAT OF THE INFAMOUS PEOPLE'S LIBERATION BATTALION?

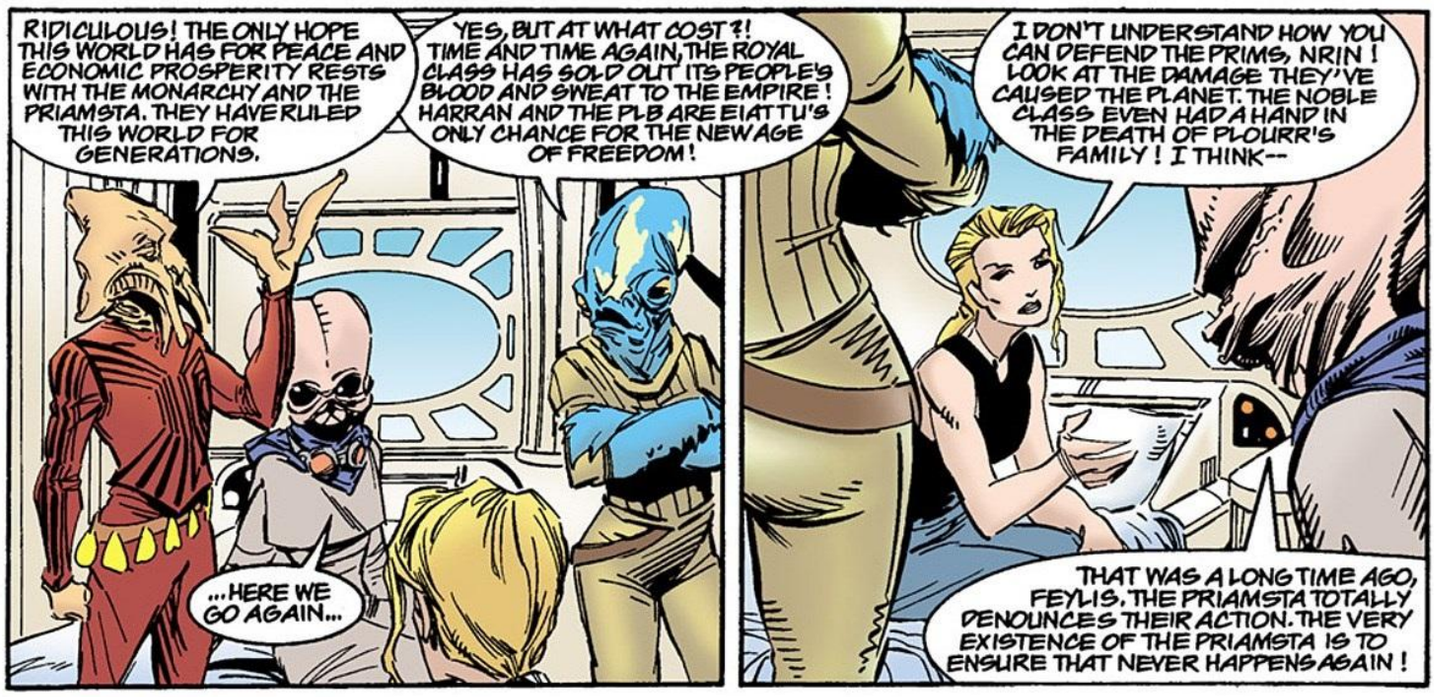
THEY'RE A DEDICATED BUNCH, WITH NO LOVE FOR THE EMPIRE OR THE PRIAMSTA, I CAN TELL YOU.
AND WHAT DO THEY THINK OF THE ALLIANCE?
THEY SEEM TO BE PRO-ALLIANCE, AS LONG AS WE'RE FIGHTING THE EMPIRE AND HAVEN'T SIDED WITH THE NOBLES.
WHAT ABOUT THEIR LEADER, PLOURR'S BROTHER, HARRAN?

HE'S QUITE A MAN. HE HAS HIS TROOPS HIGHLY MOTIVATED AND READY FOR COMBAT.
HE SEEMED TO HAVE THIS LIGHT AROUND HIM, AS THOUGH NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WHEN HE'S AROUND. THE PLB REGULARS ARE READY TO HIT THE PRIMS HARD!
AND HE'S A DEDICATED LEADER.

HE WAS OUT ALL NIGHT LOOKING FOR ONE OF HIS LOST TROOPS.
HE FINALLY FOUND HIM EARLY THIS MORNING. THE IMPS DIDN'T LEAVE MUCH.

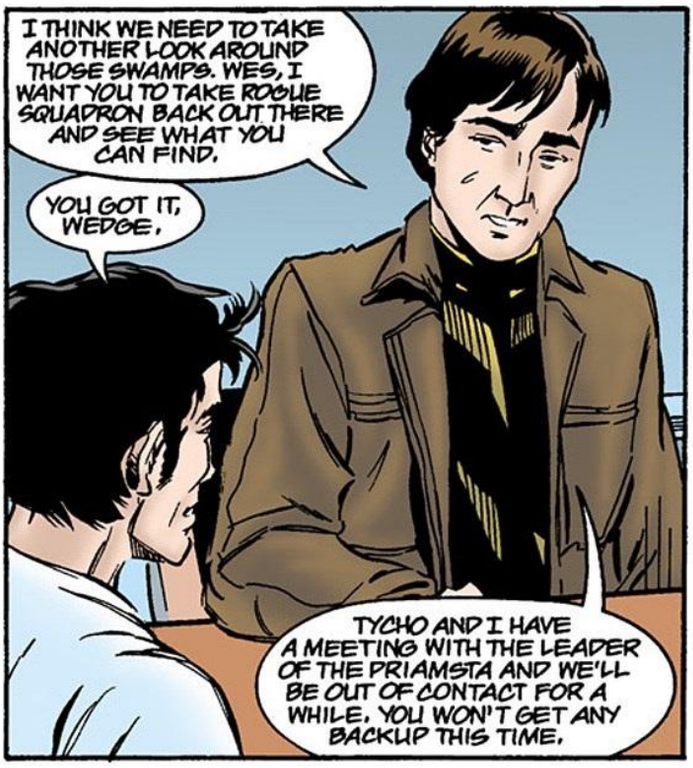

SO, WHY DIDN'T YOU REPORT IN LAST NIGHT? SOME SORT OF IMP JAMMING?
NO. PLB JAMMING. SGT. ASHAAD, THE TROOPER WHO LED US BACK THIS MORNING, TOLD ME THAT THE PLB HAVE STATIC GENERATORS PLACED ALL AROUND THEIR CAMP.
AH, THAT WAY NEITHER THE PRIMS NOR THE IMPS CAN GET A FIX ON THEIR LOCATION.

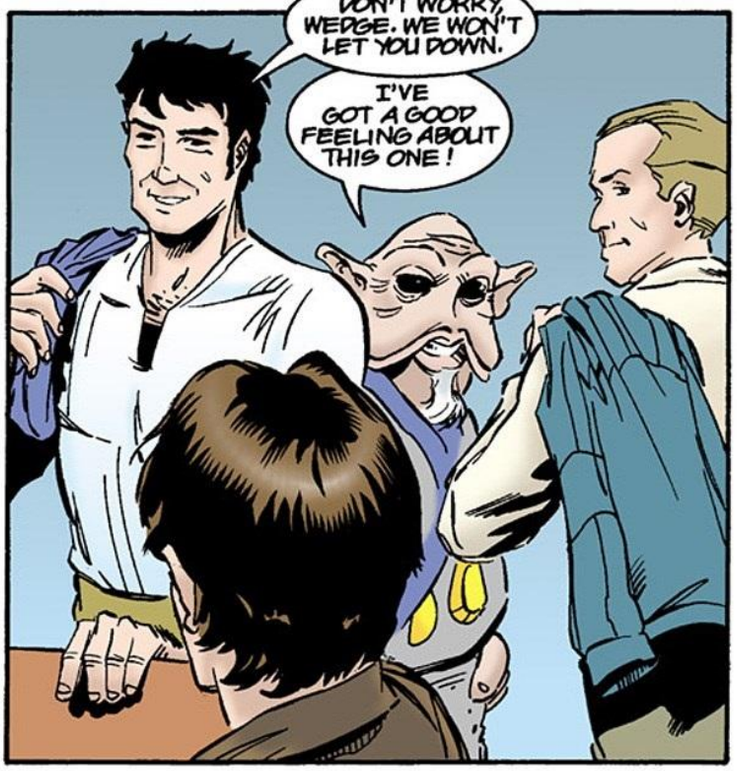

SAY WEDGE, DID YOU GET AN EXIT VECTOR ON THOSE TIES THAT RAN OFF?
LOOKED TO ME LIKE THEY WENT DEEPER INTO THE SWAMPS, WHY?
BECAUSE THAT'S THE DIRECTION THE IMPS WENT WHEN THE PLB SHOWED UP.

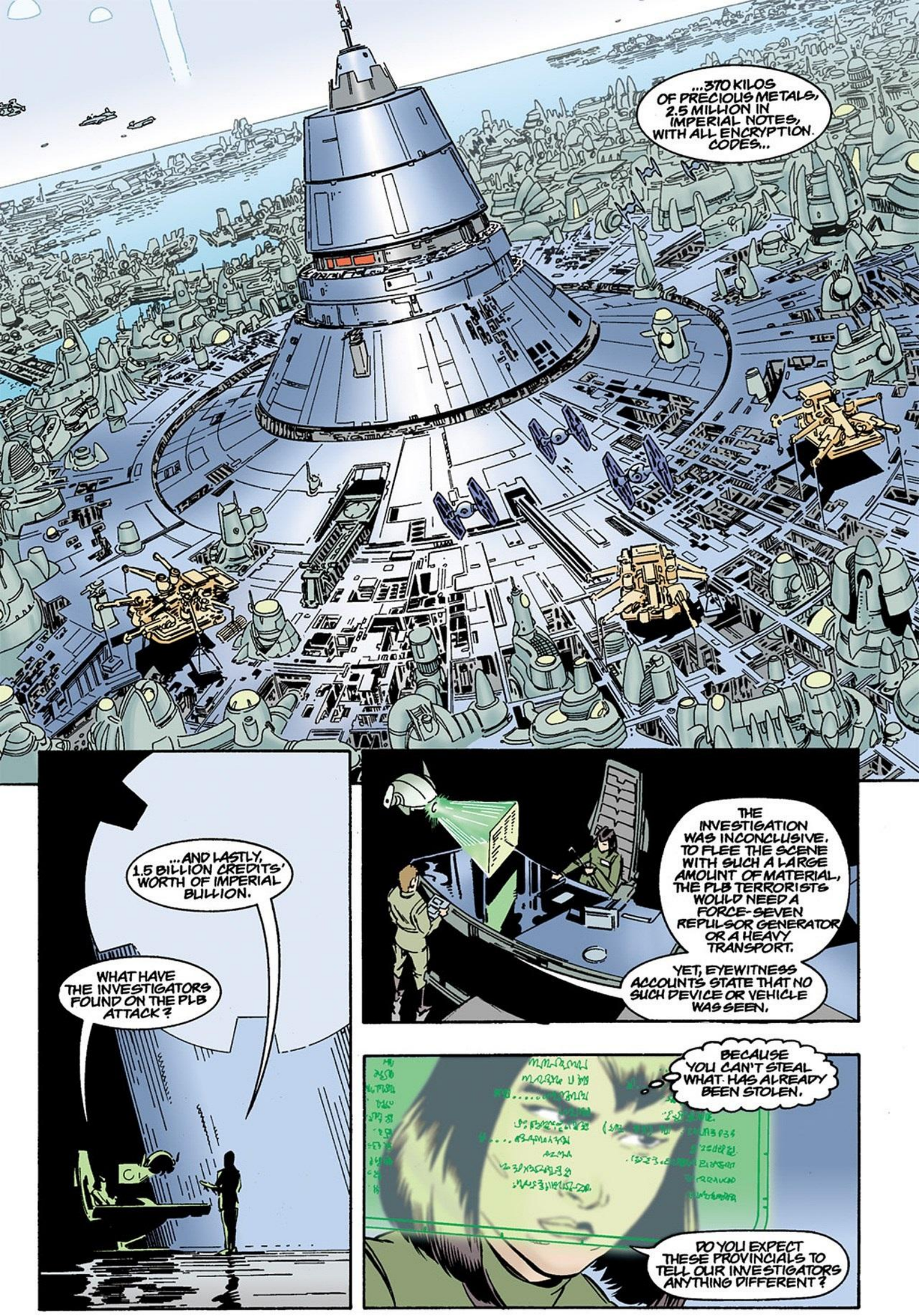

RIDICULOUS! THE ONLY HOPE THIS WORLD HAS FOR PEACE AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY RESTS WITH THE MONARCHY AND THE PRIAMSTA. THEY HAVE RULED THIS WORLD FOR GENERATIONS.
YES, BUT AT WHAT COST?! TIME AND TIME AGAIN, THE ROYAL CLASS HAS SOLD OUT ITS PEOPLE'S BLOOD AND SWEAT TO THE EMPIRE! HARRAN AND THE PLB ARE EIATTU'S ONLY CHANCE FOR THE NEW AGE OF FREEDOM!
...HERE WE GO AGAIN...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU CAN DEFEND THE PRIMS, NRIN! LOOK AT THE DAMAGE THEY'VE CAUSED THE PLANET. THE NOBLE CLASS EVEN HAD A HAND IN THE DEATH OF PLOURR'S FAMILY! I THINK--
THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, FEYLIS. THE PRIAMSTA TOTALLY DENOUNCES THEIR ACTION. THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE PRIAMSTA IS TO ENSURE THAT NEVER HAPPENS AGAIN!

HOW CAN WE BE SO SURE THAT THOSE NOBLES WHO TOOK PART IN THE KILLINGS AREN'T MEMBERS OF THE PRIMS? WHY SHOULD PLOURR TRUST THEM?
SHE MUST, FOR THE GOOD OF THE ROYAL HOUSE! PLOURR MUST PLACE HER PERSONAL FEELINGS ASIDE!

LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE HAS AN OPINION ON THE SITUATION.
IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE FOR THE IMPS TO HEAD BACK INTO THE SWAMP--
--UNLESS THEY HAVE SOMETHING TO HIDE IN THERE!


I THINK WE NEED TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AROUND THOSE SWAMPS. WES, I WANT YOU TO TAKE ROGUE SQUADRON BACK OUT THERE AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN FIND.
YOU GOT IT, WEDGE.
TYCHO AND I HAVE A MEETING WITH THE LEADER OF THE PRIAMSTA AND WE'LL BE OUT OF CONTACT FOR A WHILE. YOU WON'T GET ANY BACKUP THIS TIME.

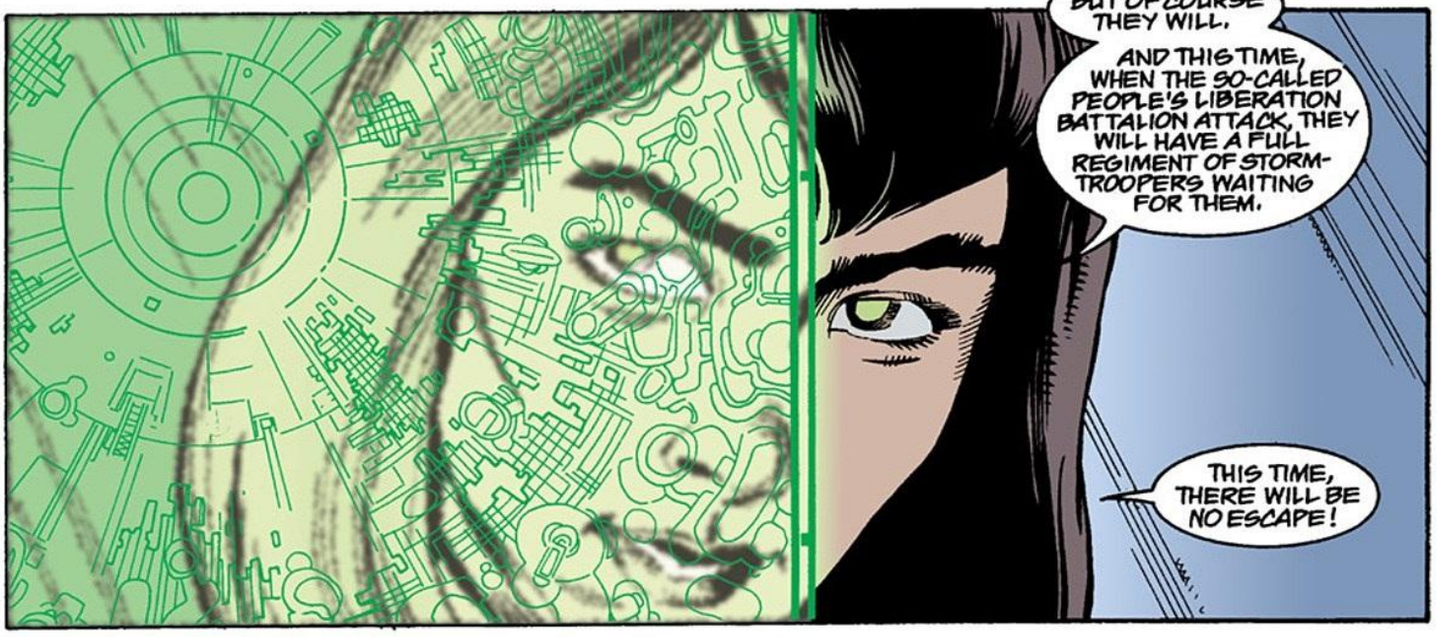

DON'T WORRY, WEDGE. WE WON'T LET YOU DOWN.
I'VE GOT A GOOD FEELING ABOUT THIS ONE!

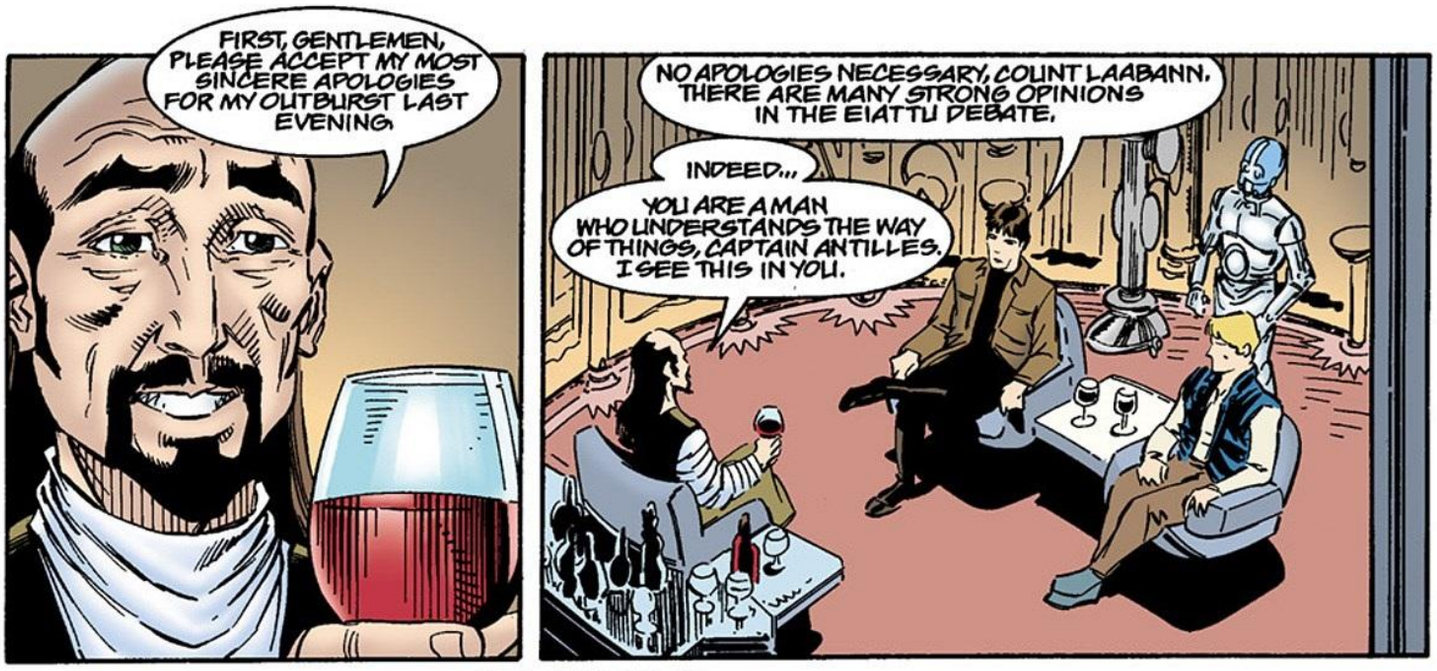

...370 KILOS OF PRECIOUS METALS, 2.5 MILLION IN IMPERIAL NOTES, WITH ALL ENCRYPTION CODES...
...AND LASTLY, 1.5 BILLION CREDITS' WORTH OF IMPERIAL BULLION.
WHAT HAVE THE INVESTIGATORS FOUND ON THE PLB ATTACK?
THE INVESTIGATION WAS INCONCLUSIVE. TO FLEE THE SCENE WITH SUCH A LARGE AMOUNT OF MATERIAL, THE PLB TERRORISTS WOULD NEED A FORCE-SEVEN REPULSOR GENERATOR OR A HEAVY TRANSPORT.
YET, EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS STATE THAT NO SUCH DEVICE OR VEHICLE WAS SEEN.
BECAUSE YOU CAN'T STEAL WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN STOLEN.
DO YOU EXPECT THESE PROVINCIALS TO TELL OUR INVESTIGATORS ANYTHING DIFFERENT?

I AM SURE THE PLB PAYS WELL FOR THE PROVINCIALS' LOYALTY AND SILENCE.
INDEED, MY LADY.
SHOW ME THE ROYAL REPOSITORIES THAT HAVE NOT BEEN ATTACKED BY THE PLB.
THREE ROYAL REPOSITORIES REMAIN UNTOUCHED BY THE PLB TERRORISTS.

VERY WELL.
HAVE ALL THE WEALTH IN THOSE STOREHOUSES SHIPPED... HERE!

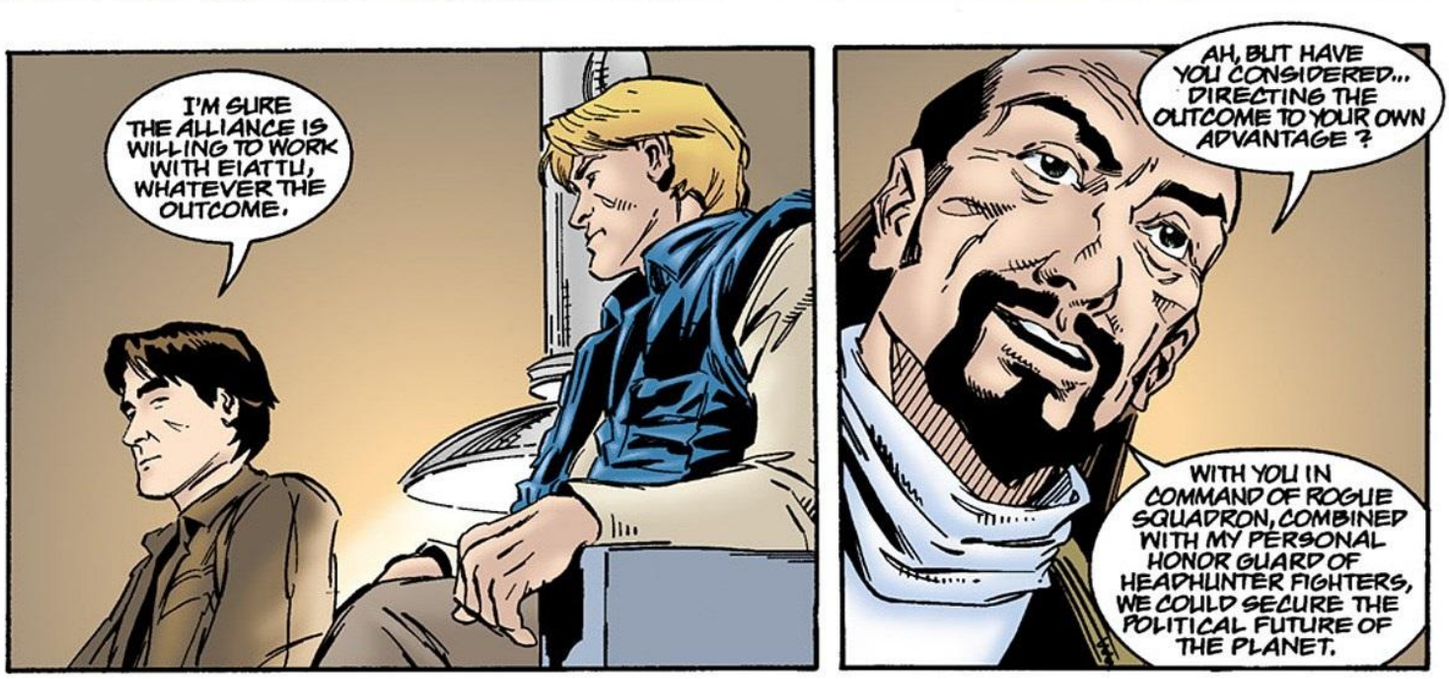
H-HERE ?? BUT MY LADY, SURELY THE TERRORISTS WILL STRIKE AT THIS FACILITY.


BUT OF COURSE THEY WILL.
AND THIS TIME, WHEN THE SO-CALLED PEOPLE'S LIBERATION BATTALION ATTACK, THEY WILL HAVE A FULL REGIMENT OF STORM-TROOPERS WAITING FOR THEM.
THIS TIME, THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPE!

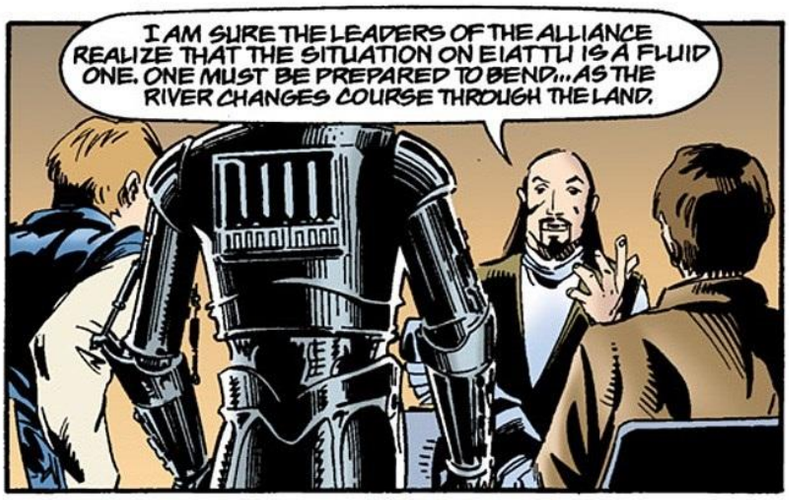

FIRST, GENTLEMEN, PLEASE ACCEPT MY MOST SINCERE APOLOGIES FOR MY OUTBURST LAST EVENING.
NO APOLOGIES NECESSARY, COUNT LAABANN. THERE ARE MANY STRONG OPINIONS IN THE EIATTU DEBATE.
INDEED...
YOU ARE A MAN WHO UNDERSTANDS THE WAY OF THINGS, CAPTAIN ANTILLES. I SEE THIS IN YOU.

THANK YOU, COUNT LAABANN. BUT I'M SURE YOU DIDN'T ASK US HERE TO TRADE PLEASANTRIES.
AH, A MAN WHO DOES NOT WASTE WORDS. AN EXCELLENT TRAIT IN AN OFFICER.
WELL THEN, TO THE POINT OF THE MATTER.

I AM SURE, MY DEAR CAPTAIN, THAT YOU REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF EIATTU TO THE ALLIANCE. TRADE ROUTES, A FRIENDLY PORT... A WATCHFUL EYE OVER THE EMPIRE...
...HAVE YOU MEASURED THE GOALS OF THE ALLIANCE AND THOSE OF YOUR FORMER PILOT, OUR PRINCESS ISPLOURRDACARTHA?


I'M SURE THE ALLIANCE IS WILLING TO WORK WITH EIATTU, WHATEVER THE OUTCOME.
AH, BUT HAVE YOU CONSIDERED... DIRECTING THE OUTCOME TO YOUR OWN ADVANTAGE?
WITH YOU IN COMMAND OF ROGUE SQUADRON, COMBINED WITH MY PERSONAL HONOR GUARD OF HEADHUNTER FIGHTERS, WE COULD SECURE THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE PLANET.

WHAT!!?? TEAM UP WITH YOU AGAINST PLOURR??!! DON'T BET ON IT, YOU--
--EASY, TYCHO.
COUNT LAABANN, THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN. THE ALLIANCE CANNOT AND WILL NOT TAKE SIDES IN THIS MATTER. WE--
CAPTAIN, SHOULD YOU NOT INFORM YOUR SUPERIORS OF MY OFFER?


I AM SURE THE LEADERS OF THE ALLIANCE REALIZE THAT THE SITUATION ON EIATTU IS A FLUID ONE. ONE MUST BE PREPARED TO BEND... AS THE RIVER CHANGES COURSE THROUGH THE LAND.

AND WHO KNOWS, PERHAPS OUR NEWLY FOUND PRINCESS MAY JUST DECIDE TO DISAPPEAR ONCE AGAIN.

PLOURR IS A BIG GIRL, SHE CAN TAKE CARE OF HERSELF. I THINK YOU'LL FIND HER TO BE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO HANDLE.
BUT IF YOU WANT TO TRY ME AS WELL?
YOU'RE MAKING WAGERS THAT YOUR NOBILITY CAN'T HONOR.

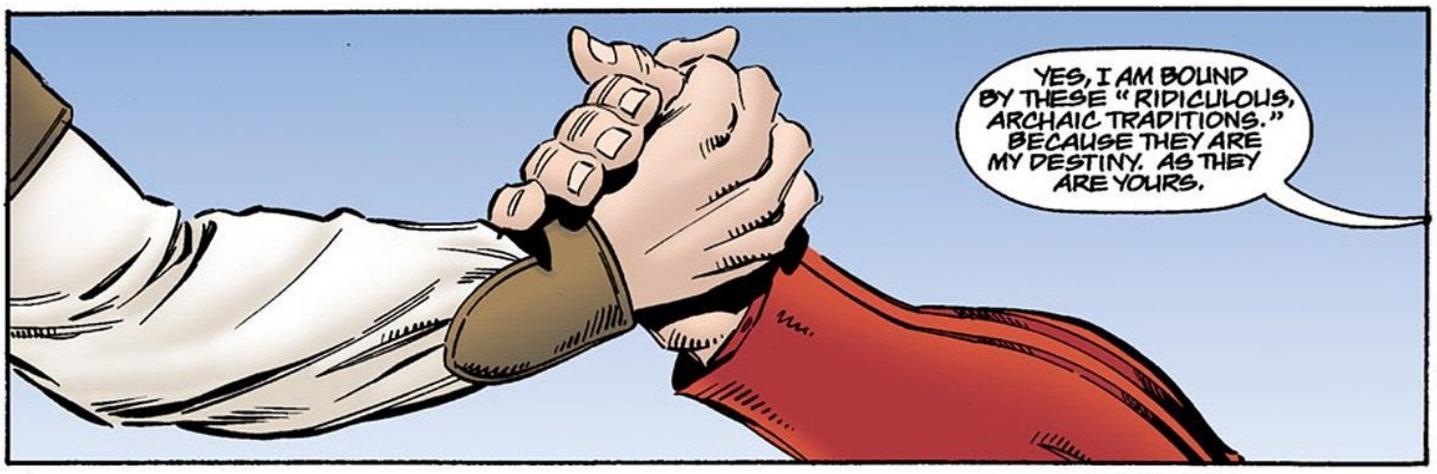
POE, THE DOOR.
VERY GOOD, SIR.

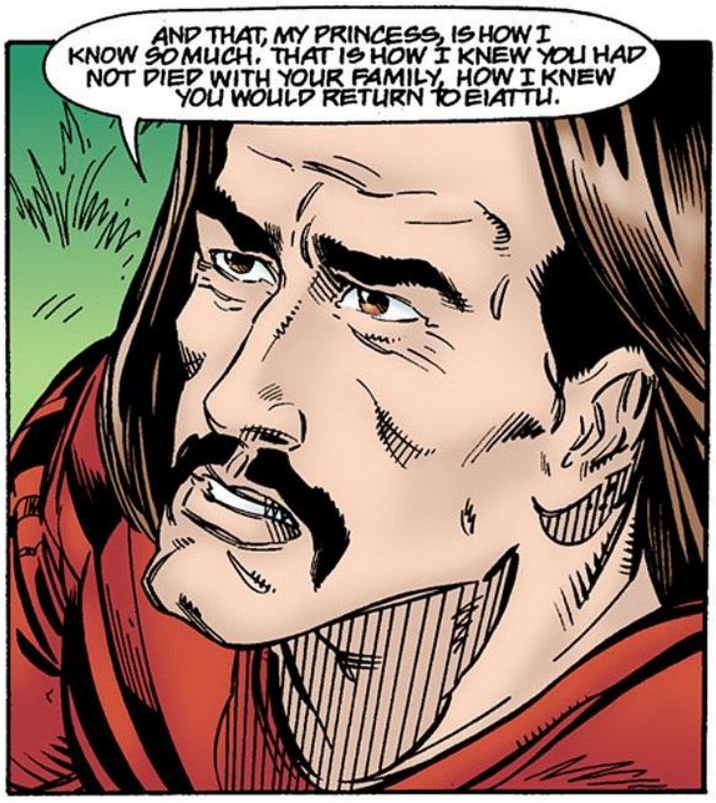
DAMN THAT REBEL UPSTART.

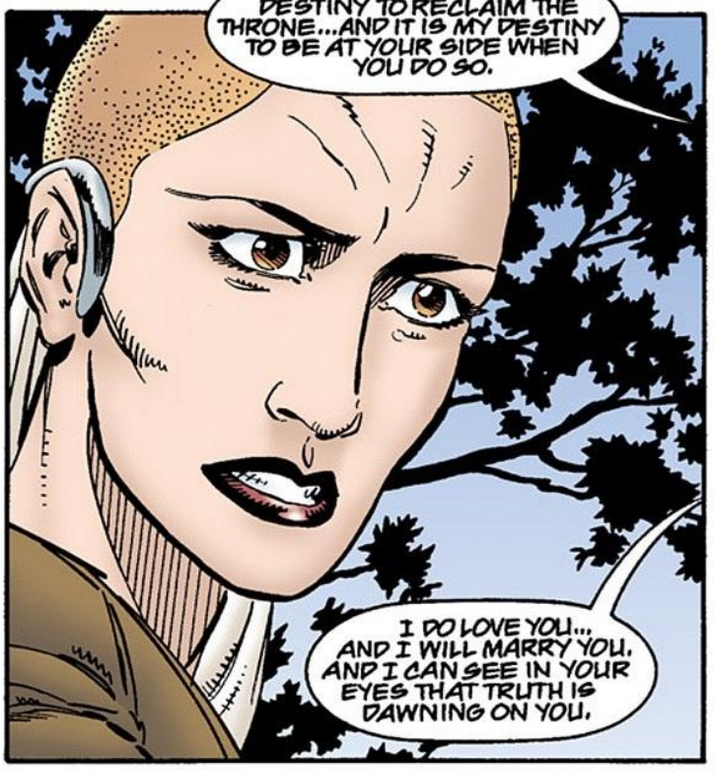
THE PLB OR THE PRIAMSTA, THESE ARE THE ALLIES I HAVE TO CHOOSE FROM? AT LEAST I KNOW WHERE THE EMPIRE STANDS!
I KNOW YOU WILL MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE.
OH? AND JUST HOW DO YOU KNOW?
BECAUSE I KNOW YOU...JUST AS EVERY HUSBAND SHOULD KNOW HIS WIFE.

I'M NOT YOUR WIFE!!!
YAAAAA!!!

I'M SORRY. BUT HOW CAN YOU CONTINUE TO HOLD ON TO THESE RIDICULOUS, ARCHAIC TRADITIONS?
WHAT IF I HAD BEEN DEAD ALL THESE YEARS, KILLED WITH MY FAMILY? WHO WOULD YOU LOVE THEN?
NO ONE. I WOULD HAVE DIED WITH YOU.


YES, I AM BOUND BY THESE "RIDICULOUS, ARCHAIC TRADITIONS." BECAUSE THEY ARE MY DESTINY. AS THEY ARE YOURS.


AND THAT, MY PRINCESS, IS HOW I KNOW SO MUCH. THAT IS HOW I KNEW YOU HAD NOT DIED WITH YOUR FAMILY, HOW I KNEW YOU WOULD RETURN TO ELATTU.


BECAUSE IT IS YOUR DESTINY TO RECLAIM THE THRONE...AND IT IS MY DESTINY TO BE AT YOUR SIDE WHEN YOU DO SO.
I DO LOVE YOU... AND I WILL MARRY YOU. AND I CAN SEE IN YOUR EYES THAT TRUTH IS DAWNING ON YOU.

COME QUIETLY, PRINCESS, AND YOU WILL NOT BE HARMED!

QUIETLY, EH? I DON'T THINK SO.

WATCH YOUR SPACING, EVERYBODY. STAY SHARP.
HEY, DLLR. YOU HEAR ANYTHING YET?
WHAT?? NO, I DON'T HEAR A THING. SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THIS PLACE, I TOLD YOU I HAD A VERY BAD--
OWWWWW!!!
DLLR, WHAT'S WRONG?!

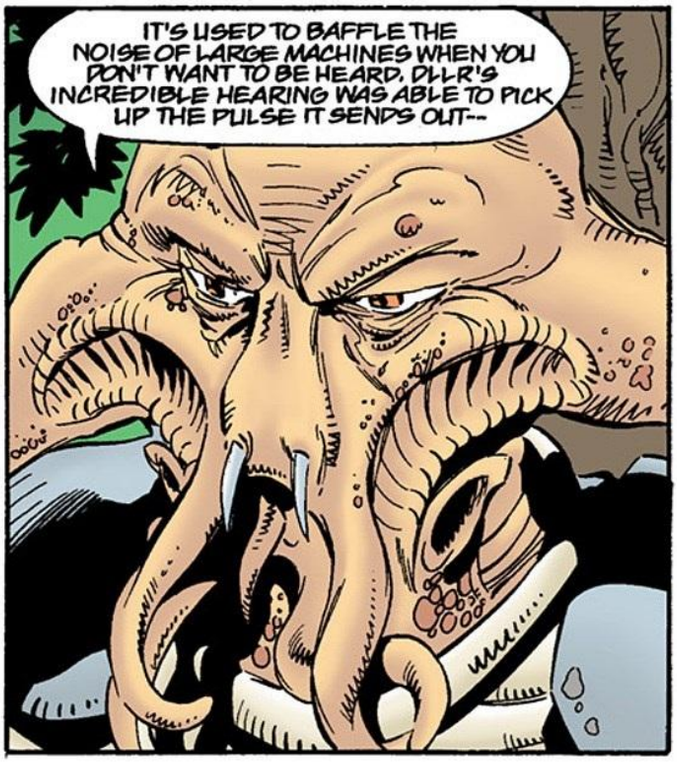
DLLR, ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH, I THINK SO. FELT LIKE SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO SLIP A VIBROBLADE THROUGH MY HEAD!
CAN YOU MAKE IT? WE COULD--

--I'M FINE, LET'S MOVE ON. MY HEAD'S CLEARING NOW.

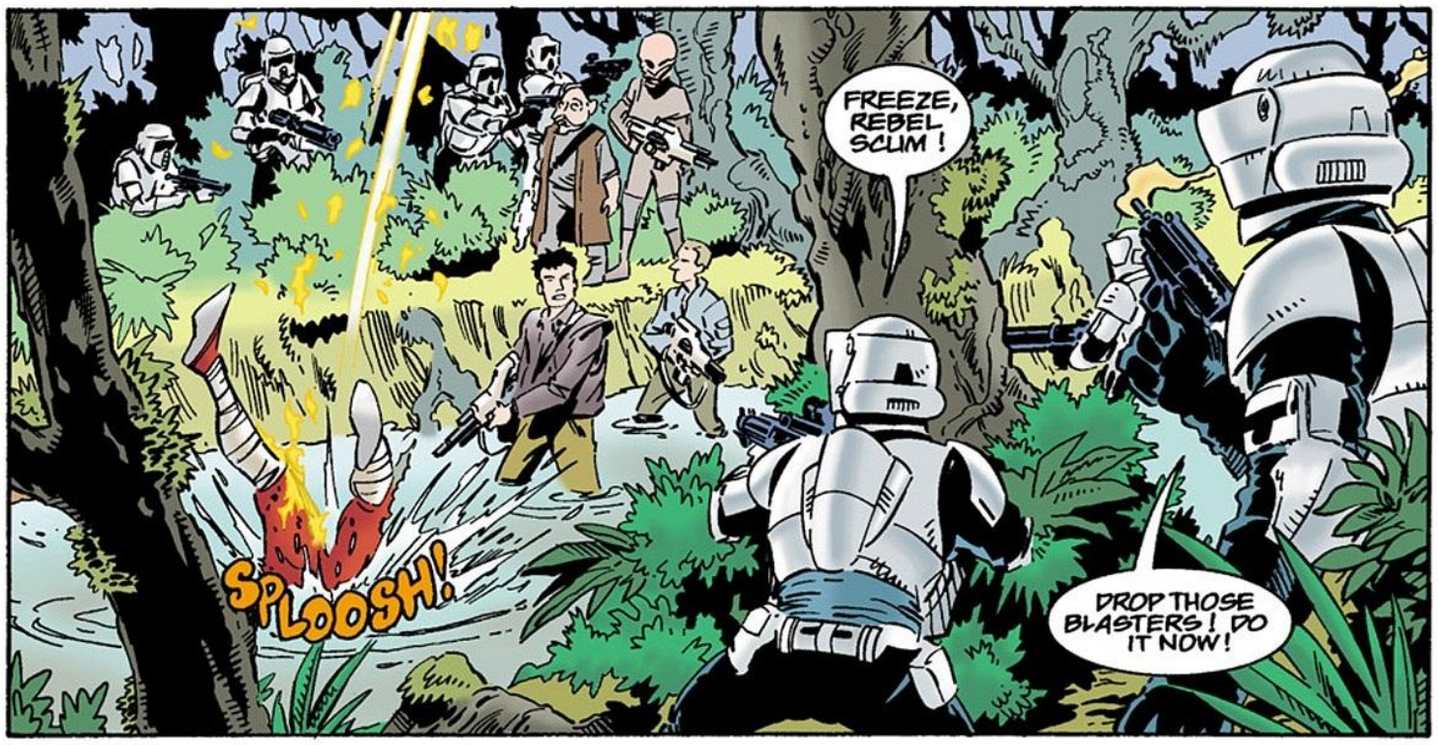
WELL, I'LL BE-- JANSON, I THINK YOU'D BETTER SEE THIS.
WHAT IS THAT?
I'VE GOT AN IDEA. IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME TO DO THE HONORS?

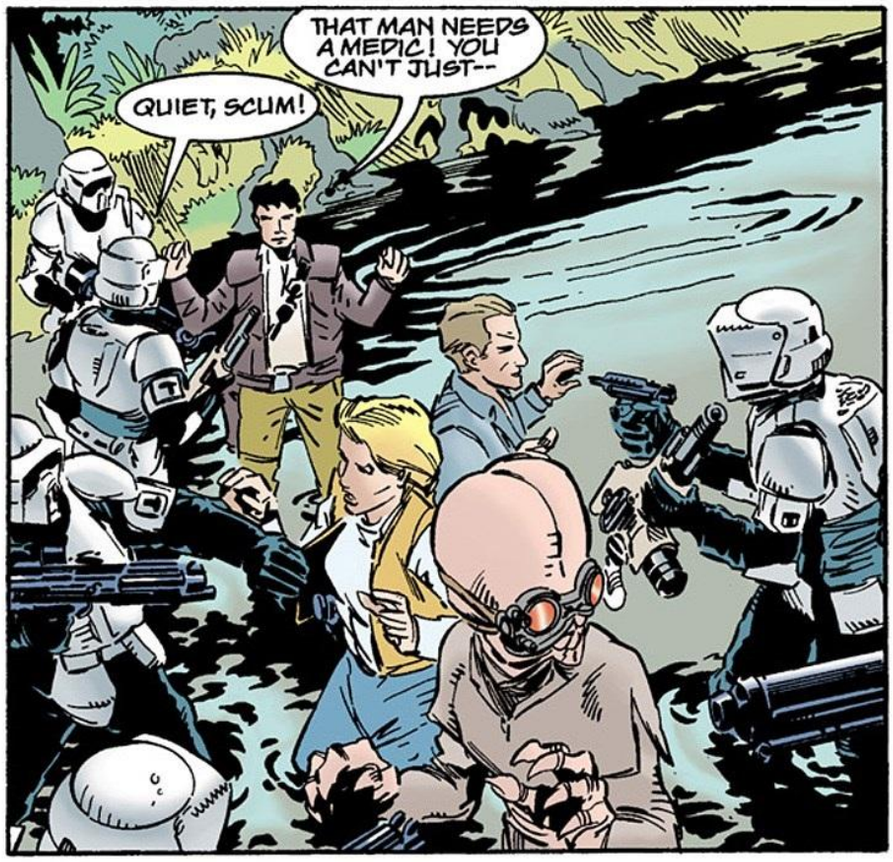
LOOKS LIKE THEY FOUND ONE, THEY'RE ALL IN POSITION. GET READY.

JUST AS I SUSPECTED. IT'S A GRAY NOISE GENERATOR. DEFINITELY AN IMPERIAL DEVICE.
GREAT.
BUT WHY? AND WHY DID IT AFFECT DLLR AND NOT US?


IT'S USED TO BAFFLE THE NOISE OF LARGE MACHINES WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO BE HEARD. DLLR'S INCREDIBLE HEARING WAS ABLE TO PICK UP THE PULSE IT SENDS OUT--

AGGGGG!
NRIN!
CHOOOM!


FREEZE, REBEL SCUM!
SPLOOSH!
DROP THOSE BLASTERS! DO IT NOW!


THAT MAN NEEDS A MEDIC! YOU CAN'T JUST--
QUIET, SCUM!

I THOUGHT SHE WANTED THEM ALL ALIVE?
WHAT'S ONE DEAD REBEL, MORE OR LESS?

IS THIS QUIET ENOUGH FOR YOU?!!
KRACKKK!

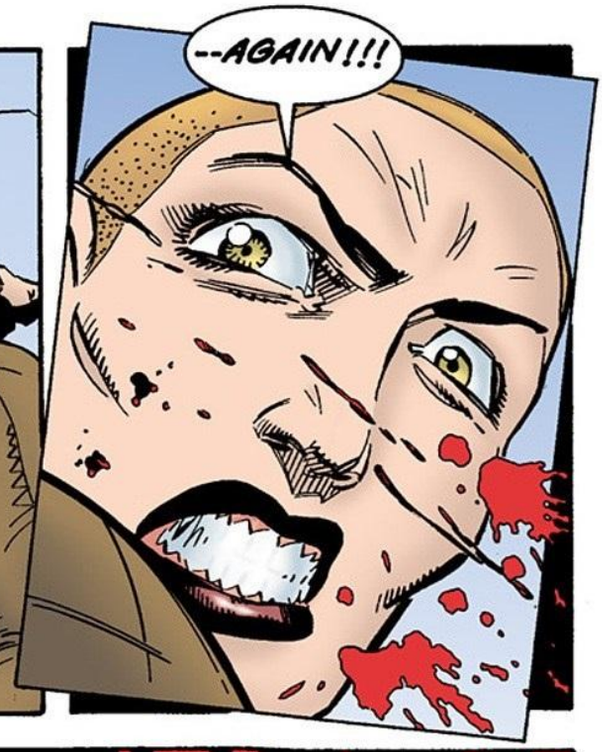
AAHHHGGGG!!
PRINCESS!!!!

SITHSPAWN!!!

DON'T YOU--

--EVER--

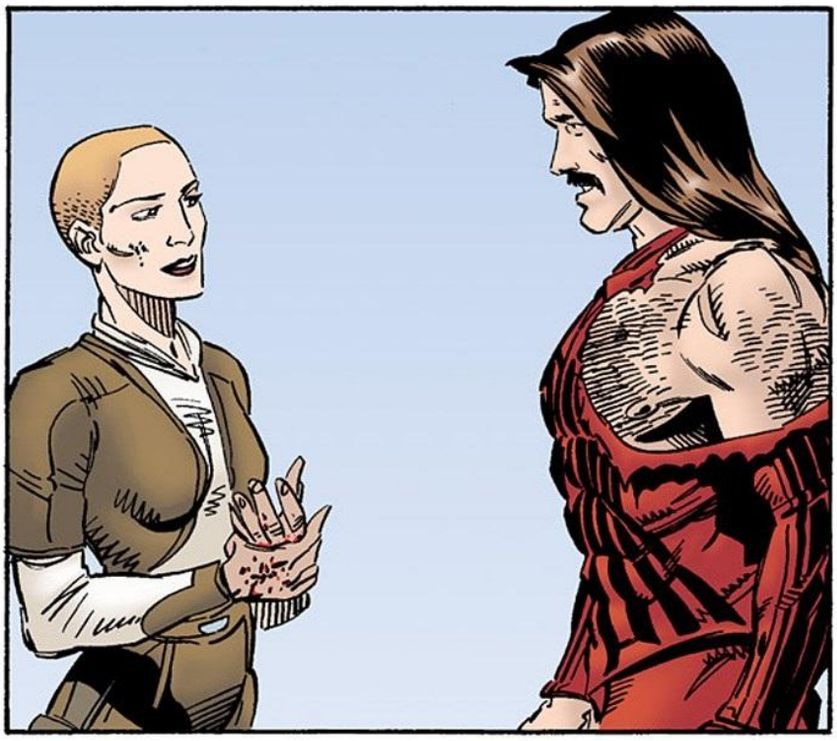
--TOUCH ME--

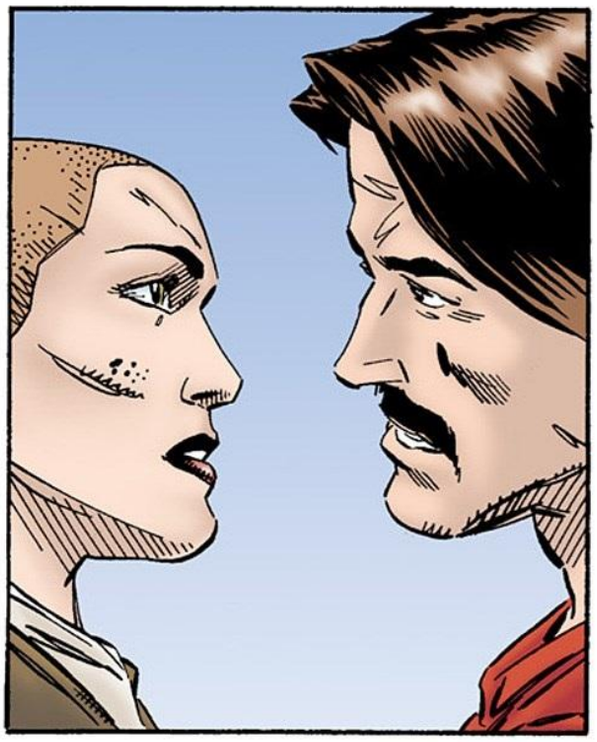

--AGAIN!!!

ELLER!!!

RIAL... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ?

JUST FINE, MY PRINCESS.
HOW ABOUT YOU ?





PLOURR!! COUNT PERNON!
ARE YOU TWO ALL RIGHT?

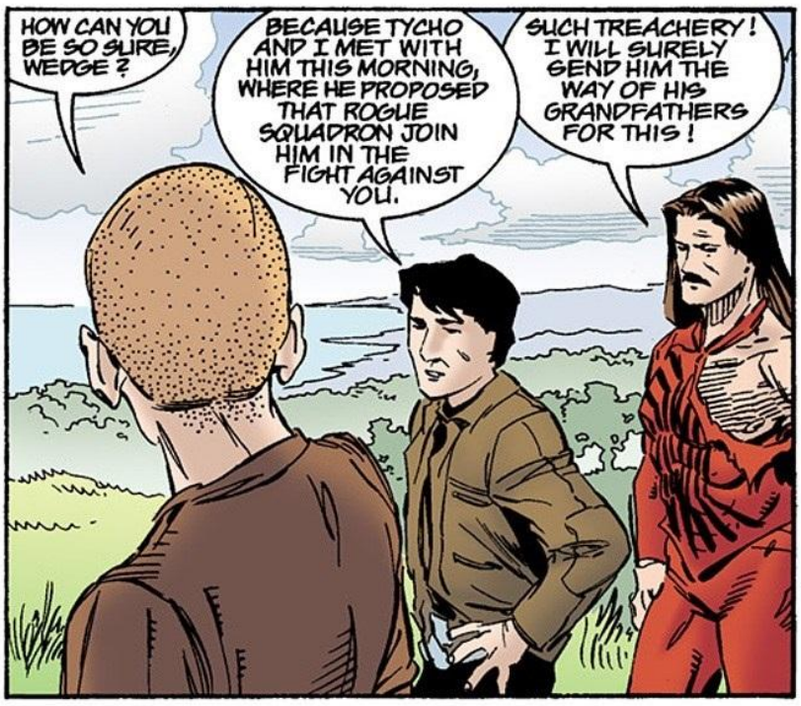
IT'S OKAY, WEDGE. WE'RE FINE.
WOW, IT LOOKS LIKE THESE GUYS COULD'VE USED YOUR HELP!

NYNIE TOLD US THAT YOU AND THE COUNT WERE OUT RIDING, WE GOT HERE AS SOON AS WE COULD. I HAVE NEWS ABOU--
--BY THE ROYAL BLOOD...

RIAL, WHAT'S WRONG?
THIS IS WHAT IS WRONG!

THIS MAN IS A MEMBER OF THE PRIAMSTA!

IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO SURMISE THE IDENTITY OF THE SCOUNDREL BEHIND THIS COWARDLY ACT!
COUNT LAABANN!


HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE, WEDGE ?
BECAUSE TYCHO AND I MET WITH HIM THIS MORNING, WHERE HE PROPOSED THAT ROGUE SQUADRON JOIN HIM IN THE FIGHT AGAINST YOU.
SUCH TREACHERY ! I WILL SURELY SEND HIM THE WAY OF HIS GRANDFATHERS FOR THIS !

THIS WAS AN ATTEMPT TO KIDNAP YOU, PLOURR. LAABANN KNEW HE COULDN'T KILL YOU WITHOUT HAVING THE ALLIANCE SIDE AGAINST HIM. BUT WITH YOU IN HIS HANDS HE COULD USE YOU AS A BARGAINING CHIP.

DO YOU SEE, PRINCESS ?! YOUR CHOICE IS CLEAR ! YOU MUST SIDE WITH PLB AND YOUR BROTHER, HARRAN !
YOU'RE RIGHT, RIAL. I KNOW NOW THAT I CAN'T TRUST THE PRIMS, AND COUNT LAABANN MUST BE DEALT WITH.

IT WOULD SEEM THAT MY ONLY CHOICE IS TO ALLY MYSELF WITH MY BROTHER.
BUT--

--THE LEADER OF THE PLB IS NOT MY BROTHER, HARRAN.

WHAT??
BUT THE TESTS-- IT WAS CONFIRMED! THE TWO OF YOU ARE OF THE SAME BLOODLINE!
HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS, PLOURR?

BECAUSE, ON THAT NIGHT... THE NIGHT MY PARENTS AND SISTERS WERE KILLED..

...ON THAT NIGHT, I KILLED MY LITTLE BROTHER, HARRAN, WITH MY OWN HANDS...
...AND I'D DO IT AGAIN.

I SAY TO YOU COMRADES, NOW IS THE TIME TO BURN AWAY THE BLIGHT OF THE IMPERIALS AND THE PRIAMSTA!
BURN IT OFF OF THE FACE OF EIATTU WITH THE FLAME OF FREEDOM!

OUR ALLIES IN THE CAPITAL CITY HAVE INFORMED US THAT ALL OF EIATTU'S MATERIAL WEALTH HAS BEEN TRANSPORTED TO THE IMPERIAL CITADEL!
HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN WITHOUT THE ORDER OF THE PRIAMSTA AND THE BLESSING OF MY NEWLY RETURNED SISTER, ISPLOURRDACARTHA!
IT WOULD SEEM THAT MY MISGUIDED SISTER HAS TAKEN TO THE WAYS OF THE PRIAMSTA AND THE NOBLES! THE SAME SITHSPAWN THAT MURDERED OUR FAMILY YEARS AGO!

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ME TO STRIKE AT THE BLACK HEART OF THE PRIAMSTA AND THE IMPERIALS! TO AVENGE MY FAMILY AND RESTORE EIATTU TO HER FORMER GLORY!
WILL YOU HELP ME? WILL YOU HELP ME TO BRING ABOUT MY DREAM OF PEACE?

YES!
LIBERATION!!!
DEATH TO THE PRIAMSTA!!!
HARRAN!
HARRAN!
HARRAN!

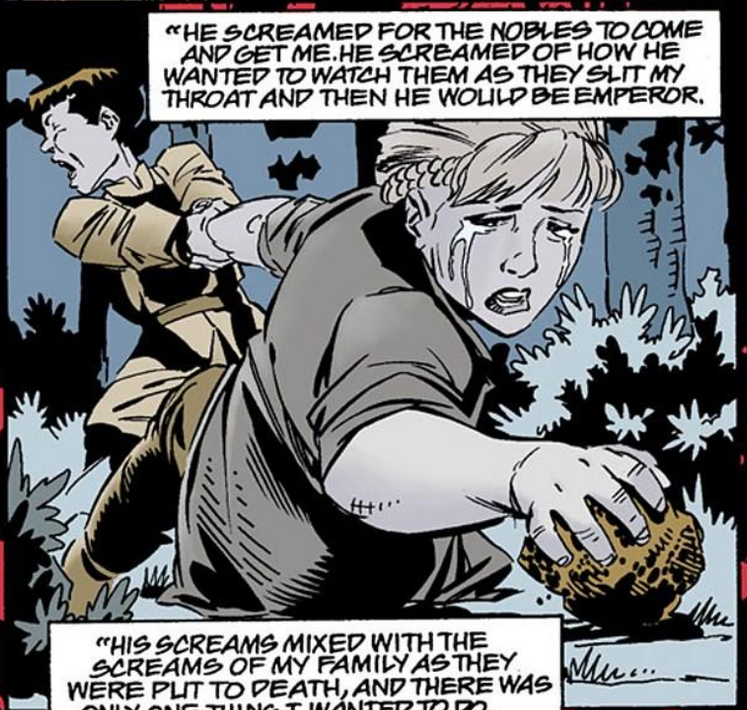
...ON THAT NIGHT, I KILLED MY LITTLE BROTHER, HARRAN, WITH MY OWN HANDS--
--AND I'D DO IT AGAIN.

BUT, HOW? WHY?

YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD HAVE SUSPECTED, RIAL. YOU KNEW WHAT PRINCE HARRAN WAS. YOU KNEW THE ROYAL FAMILY'S DIRTY LITTLE SECRET.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, PLOURR?

I MEAN THAT EVEN IN PARADISE, THERE IS ALWAYS THE TOUCH OF EVIL.

HotComic.net



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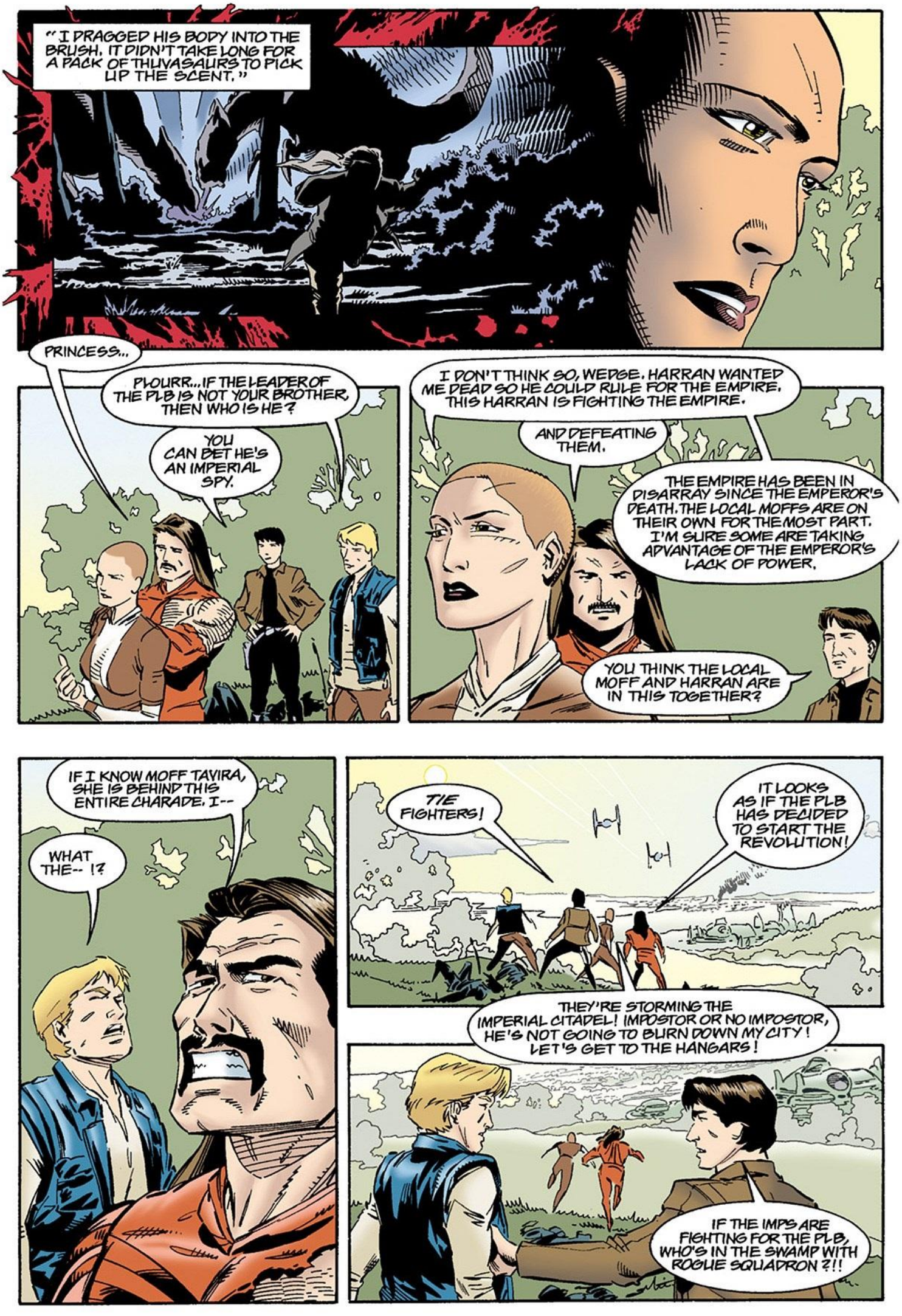
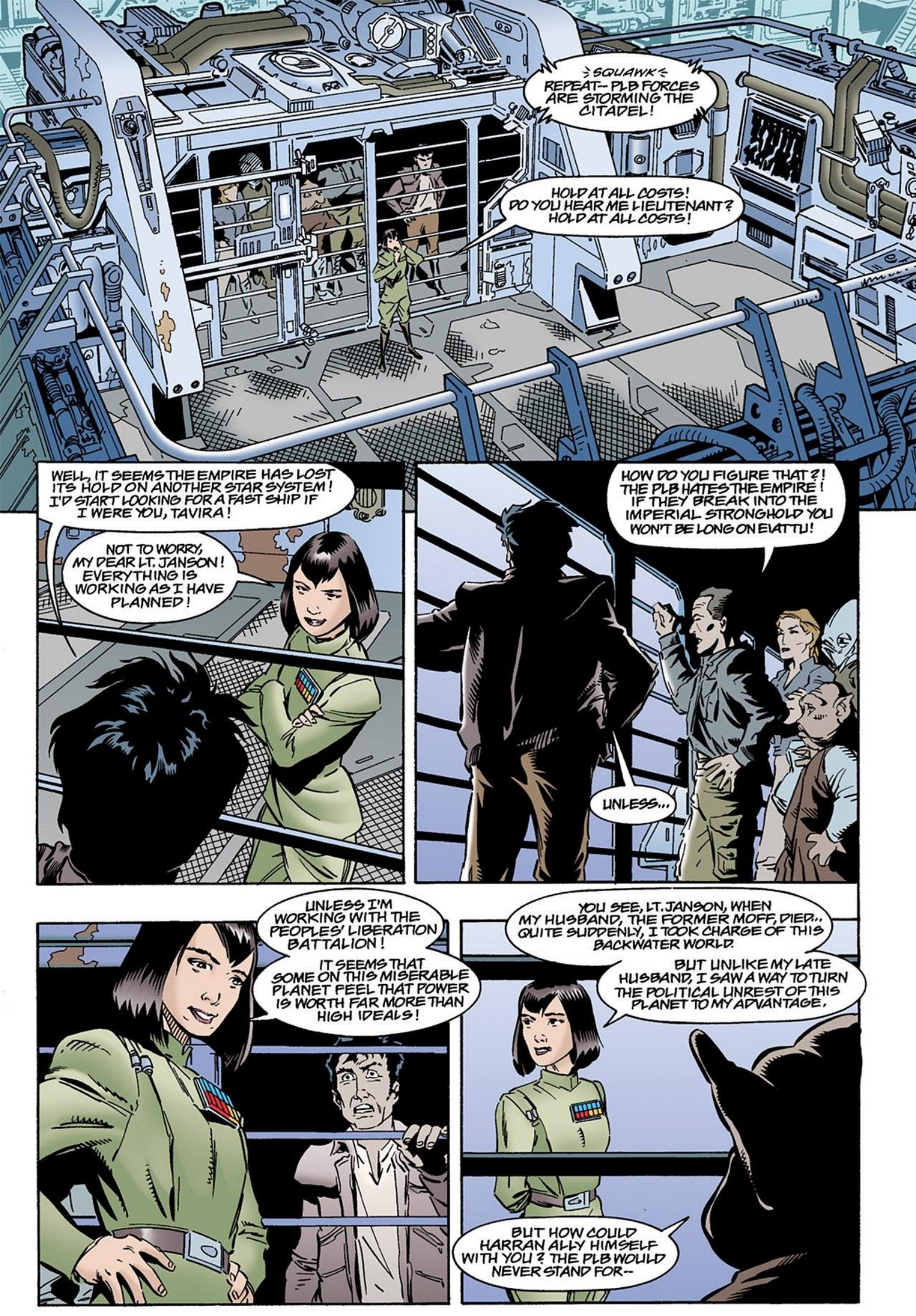
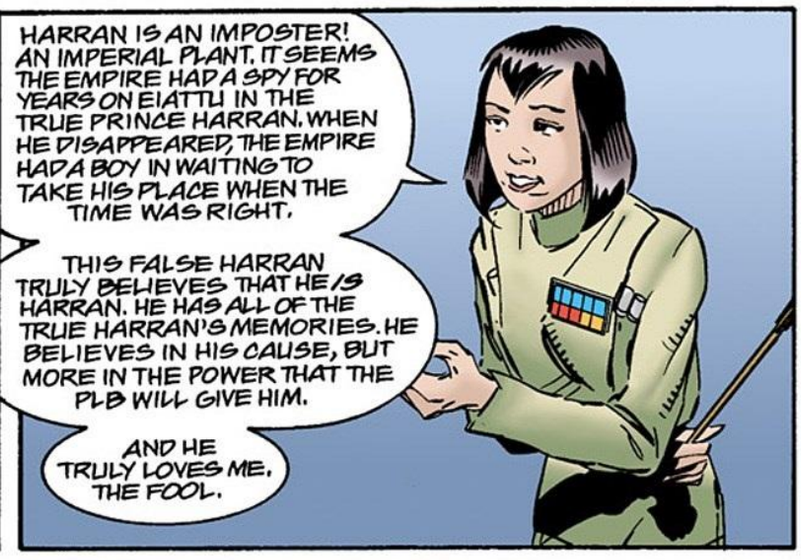

"I DRAGGED HIS BODY INTO THE BRUSH. IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR A PACK OF THUVASAURS TO PICK UP THE SCENT."
PRINCESS...
PLOURR... IF THE LEADER OF THE PLB IS NOT YOUR BROTHER, THEN WHO IS HE?
YOU CAN BET HE'S AN IMPERIAL SPY.
I DON'T THINK SO, WEDGE. HARRAN WANTED ME DEAD SO HE COULD RULE FOR THE EMPIRE. THIS HARRAN IS FIGHTING THE EMPIRE.
AND DEFEATING THEM.
THE EMPIRE HAS BEEN IN DISARRAY SINCE THE EMPEROR'S DEATH. THE LOCAL MOFFS ARE ON THEIR OWN FOR THE MOST PART. I'M SURE SOME ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE EMPEROR'S LACK OF POWER.
YOU THINK THE LOCAL MOFF AND HARRAN ARE IN THIS TOGETHER?
IF I KNOW MOFF TAVIRA, SHE IS BEHIND THIS ENTIRE CHARADE. I--
WHAT THE-- !?
TIE FIGHTERS!
IT LOOKS AS IF THE PLB HAS DECIDED TO START THE REVOLUTION!
THEY'RE STORMING THE IMPERIAL CITADEL! IMPOSTOR OR NO IMPOSTOR, HE'S NOT GOING TO BURN DOWN MY CITY! LET'S GET TO THE HANGARS!
IF THE IMPS ARE FIGHTING FOR THE PLB, WHO'S IN THE SWAMP WITH ROGUE SQUADRON?!!


SQUAWK
REPEAT-- PLB FORCES ARE STORMING THE CITADEL!
HOLD AT ALL COSTS! DO YOU HEAR ME LIEUTENANT? HOLD AT ALL COSTS!
WELL, IT SEEMS THE EMPIRE HAS LOST ITS HOLD ON ANOTHER STAR SYSTEM! I'D START LOOKING FOR A FAST SHIP IF I WERE YOU, TAVIRA!
NOT TO WORRY, MY DEAR LT. JANSON! EVERYTHING IS WORKING AS I HAVE PLANNED!
HOW DO YOU FIGURE THAT?! THE PLB HATES THE EMPIRE! IF THEY BREAK INTO THE IMPERIAL STRONGHOLD YOU WON'T BE LONG ON EIATTU!
UNLESS...
UNLESS I'M WORKING WITH THE PEOPLES' LIBERATION BATTALION!
IT SEEMS THAT SOME ON THIS MISERABLE PLANET FEEL THAT POWER IS WORTH FAR MORE THAN HIGH IDEALS!
YOU SEE, LT. JANSON, WHEN MY HUSBAND, THE FORMER MOFF, DIED... QUITE SUDDENLY, I TOOK CHARGE OF THIS BACKWATER WORLD.
BUT UNLIKE MY LATE HUSBAND, I SAW A WAY TO TURN THE POLITICAL UNREST OF THIS PLANET TO MY ADVANTAGE.
BUT HOW COULD HARRAN ALLY HIMSELF WITH YOU? THE PLB WOULD NEVER STAND FOR--

--BECAUSE I CONTROL HARRAN ESTILLO, THE LEADER OF THE PLB!

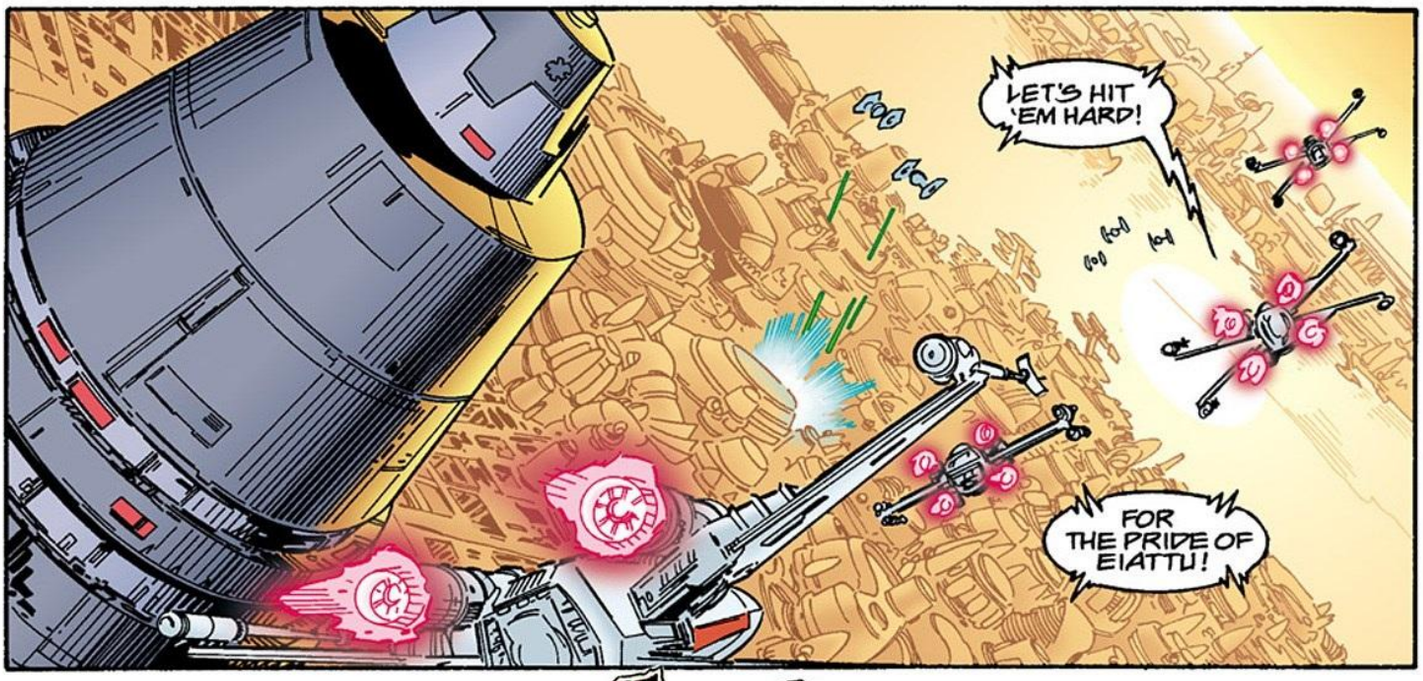

HARRAN IS AN IMPOSTER! AN IMPERIAL PLANT. IT SEEMS THE EMPIRE HAD A SPY FOR YEARS ON EIATTU IN THE TRUE PRINCE HARRAN. WHEN HE DISAPPEARED, THE EMPIRE HAD A BOY IN WAITING TO TAKE HIS PLACE WHEN THE TIME WAS RIGHT.
THIS FALSE HARRAN TRULY BELIEVES THAT HE IS HARRAN. HE HAS ALL OF THE TRUE HARRAN'S MEMORIES. HE BELIEVES IN HIS CAUSE, BUT MORE IN THE POWER THAT THE PLB WILL GIVE HIM.
AND HE TRULY LOVES ME, THE FOOL.

YOU SEE, I FEEL THE EMPIRE IS NOT LONG FOR THIS SYSTEM. I INTEND TO GET WHAT I CAN, WHILE I CAN.
IF HARRAN SUCCEEDS, I CAN LEAVE THIS BACKWARD PLANET TO THE PLB. I HAVE RAIDED ENOUGH CREDITS TO DO ANYTHING, GO ANYWHERE.

OR, I CAN MARRY HARRAN, KILL HIM, AND RULE POOR EIATTU AS HIS WIDOW.
EITHER WAY, I'LL HAVE WHAT I WANT.
THEN WHY DO YOU NEED US?
I DON'T. HOSTAGES, PERHAPS, IF PLANS SHOULD GO AWRY.

BUT THEY WON'T.
AS SOON AS I KNOW THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE...

...I'LL KILL YOU ALL.
THIS IS NOT GOOD.
WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE.
NOW THAT'S A GOOD PLAN!


LET'S HIT 'EM HARD!
FOR THE PRIDE OF EIATTU!

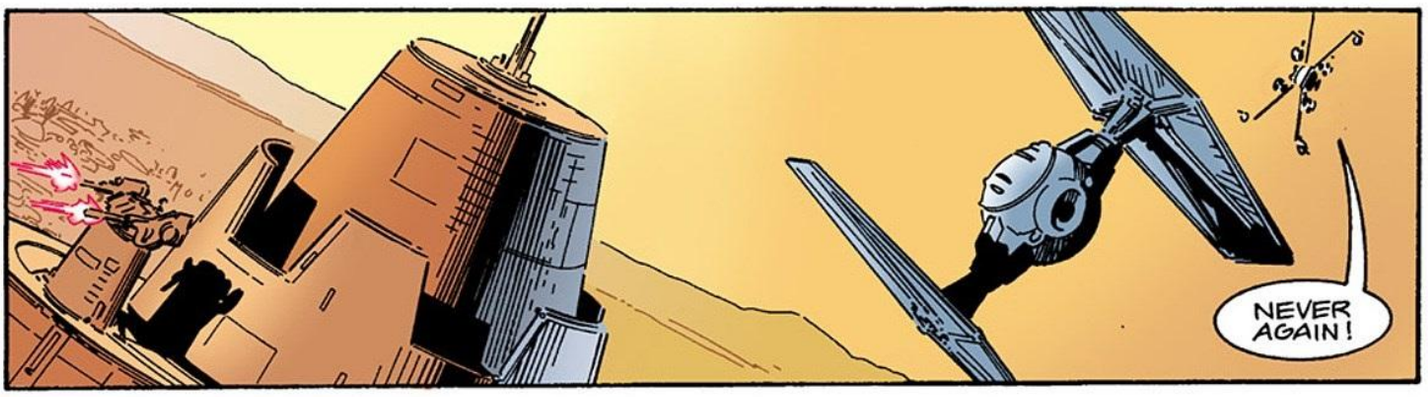
KROOM!

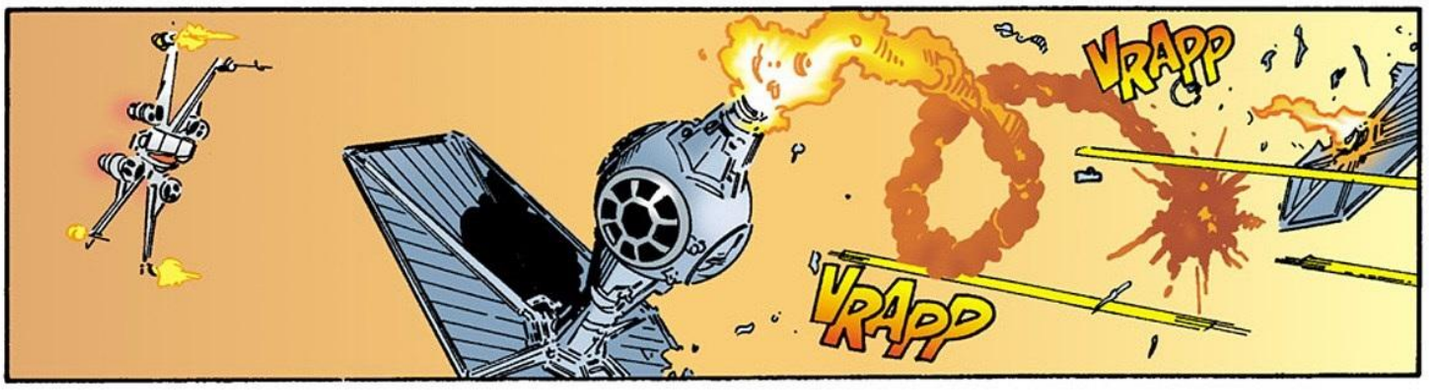
NO YOU DON'T, YOU LITTLE--

VRAAP!
VRAAP!

THANK THE STARS!

WEDGE, WE'VE GOT TO TAKE OUT THAT TURBOLASER!
I'LL BE--
NO... NOT AGAIN.


NEVER AGAIN!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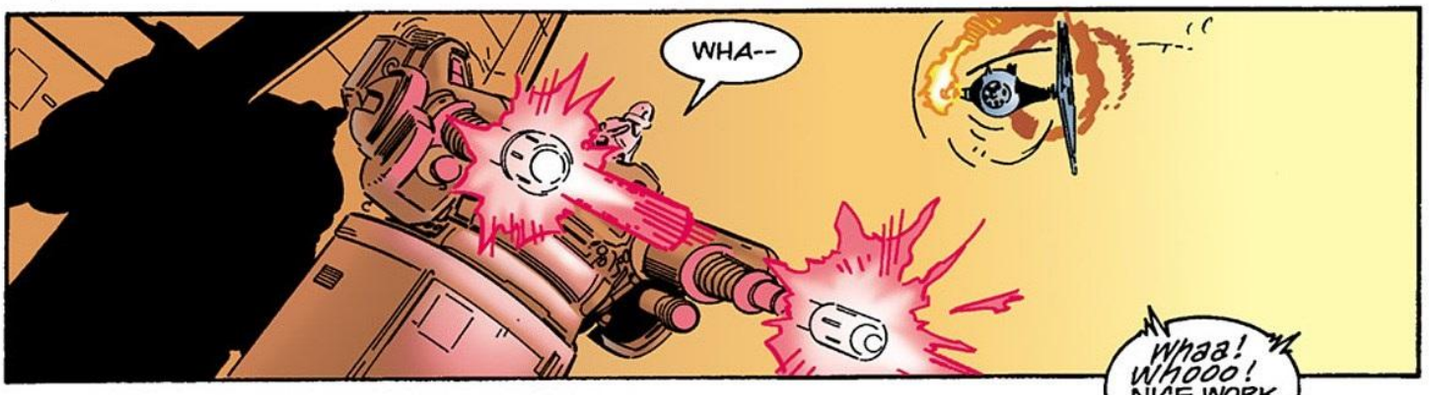
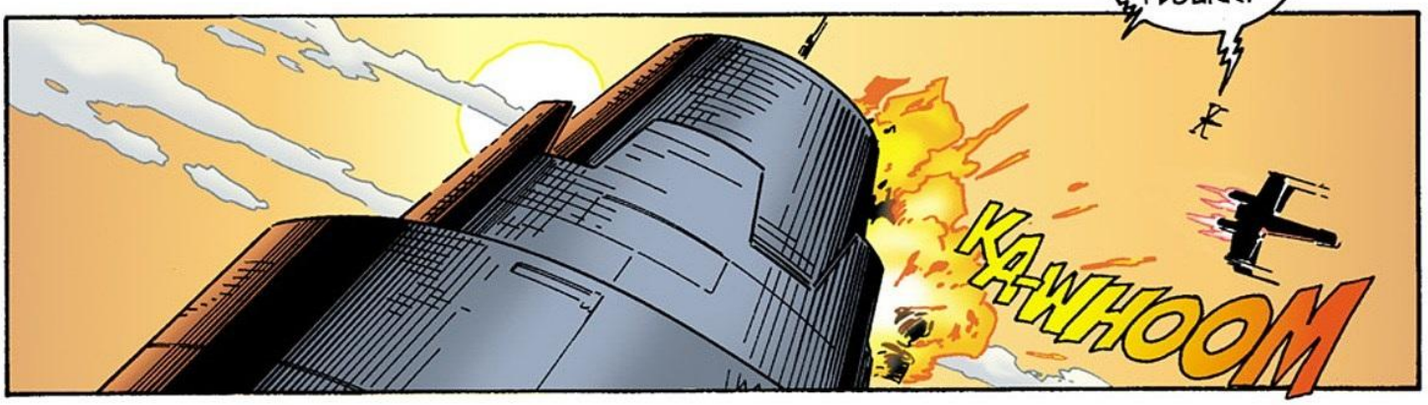

WHA--


Whaa! Whooo! NICE WORK, PLOURR!
KA-WHOOM

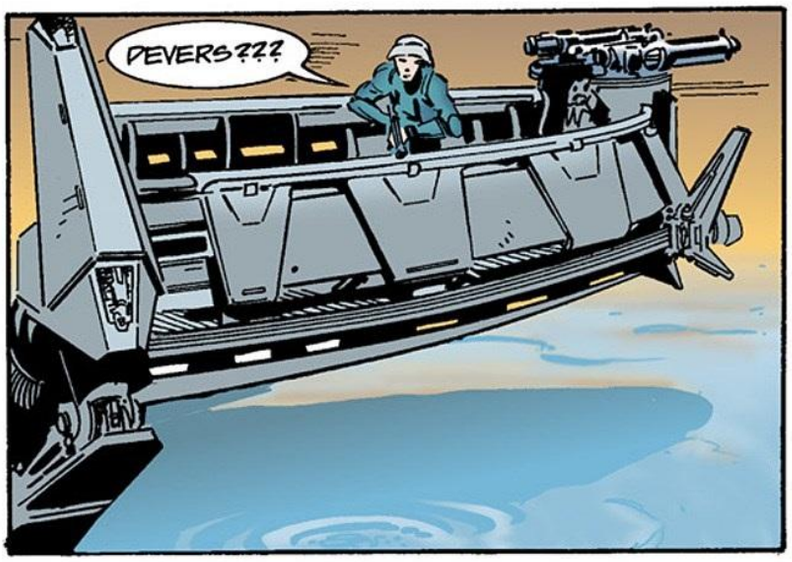
NOW THEY ONLY HAVE TO GET THROUGH A COMPANY OF STORMTROOPERS!
HEADS UP, PEOPLE! LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT MORE COMPANY!
JUST WANTED TO MAKE IT A FAIR FIGHT!

ALL THIS TIME LOOKING FOR A REBEL CORPSE! WE'LL NEVER FIND IT IN THIS MUD HOLE!
WE'D BETTER. DID YOU HEAR WHAT SHE DID TO LT. VOLKS FOR NOT BRINGING THE BODY BACK?
NO, WHAT'D SHE DO?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU CALL IT, BUT IT WASN'T PRETTY.
BLOOOPPP
BLOPPP...
BLIPPP

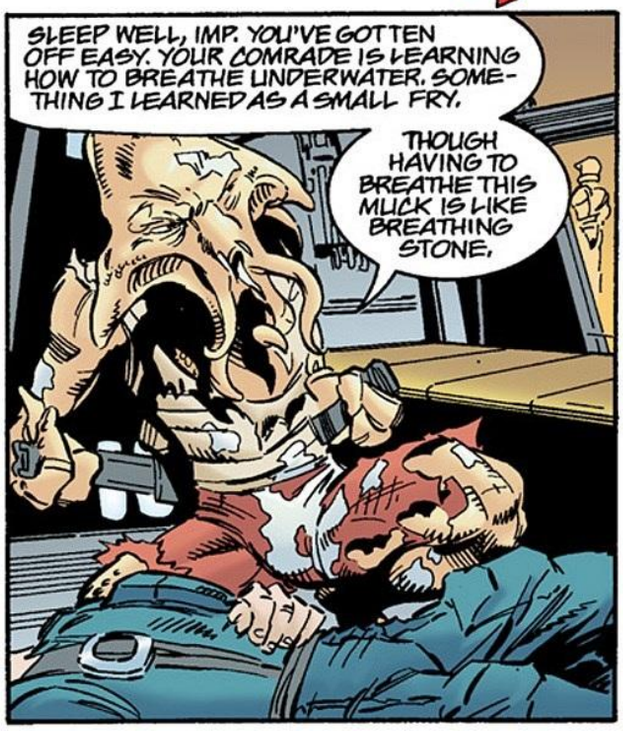
WHAT THE--
HEY, YOU BETTER WATCH IT. WHO KNOWS WHAT'S SWIMMING AROUND IN THAT MUCK.

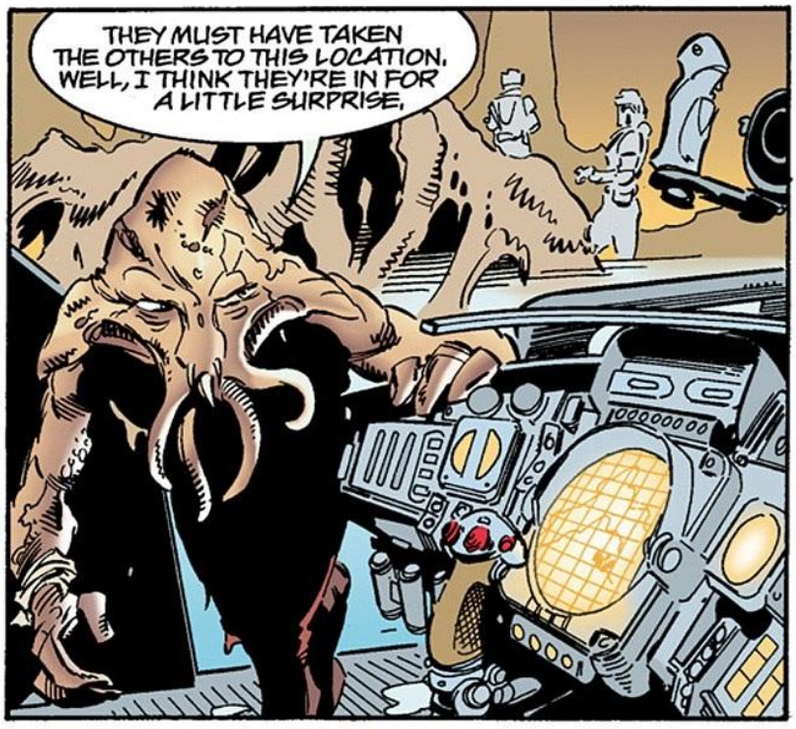
YAAAAA!!!
DEVERS!!!


DEVERS???

DEV--

KRAKKK!


SLEEP WELL, IMP. YOU'VE GOTTEN OFF EASY. YOUR COMRADE IS LEARNING HOW TO BREATHE UNDERWATER. SOMETHING I LEARNED AS A SMALL FRY.
THOUGH HAVING TO BREATHE THIS MUCK IS LIKE BREATHING STONE.


THEY MUST HAVE TAKEN THE OTHERS TO THIS LOCATION. WELL, I THINK THEY'RE IN FOR A LITTLE SURPRISE.

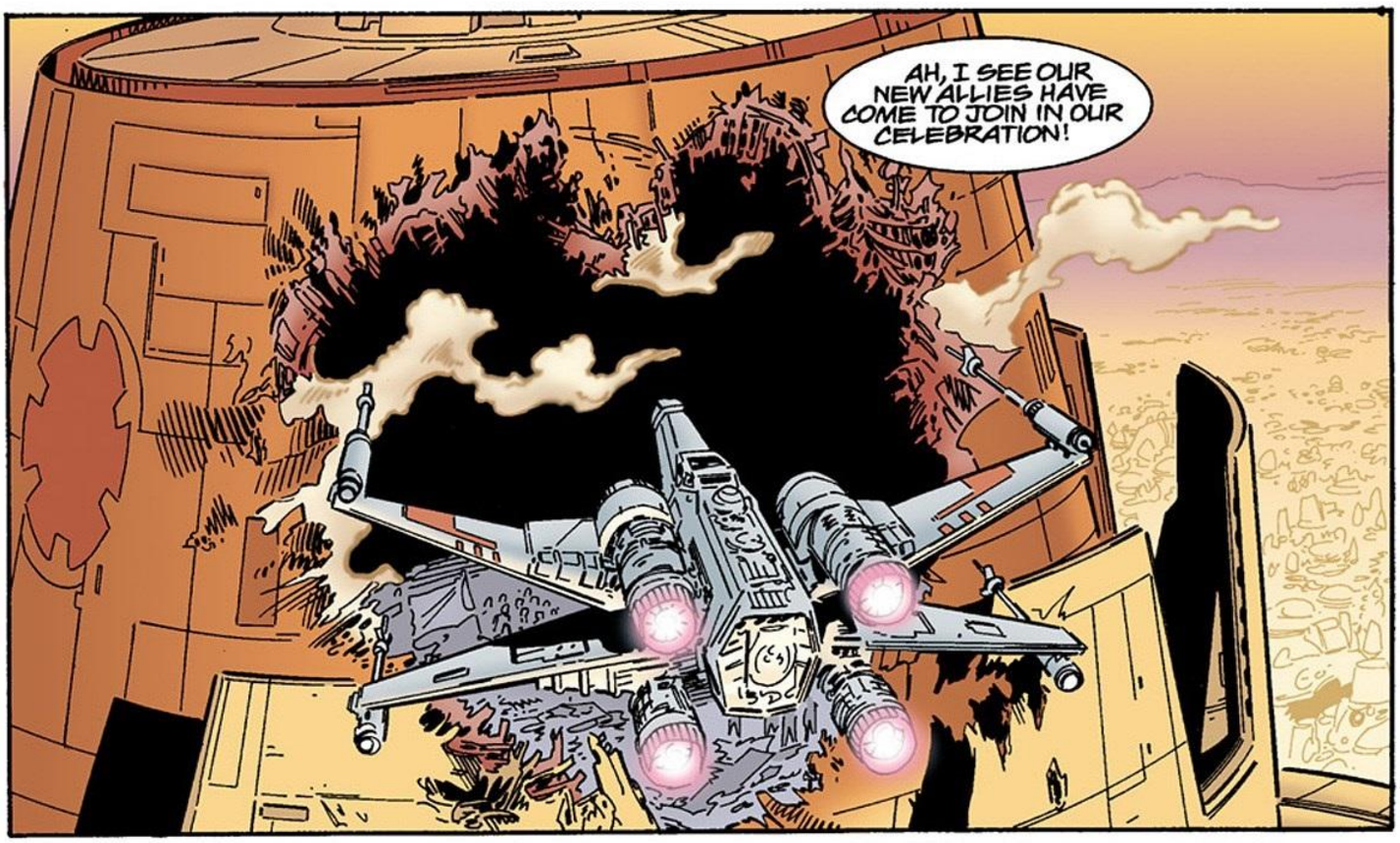
YOU THERE! DON'T MOVE!
UH, OH. TIME TO GO!

ROGUE SQUADRON, HERE I COME! YEEEEHAAAAA!
VRAPPP!
VRAPPP!

LIBERATION!!!

CHECK THOSE CORNERS! WATCH YOURSELVES, THIS PLACE COULD CAVE IN AT ANY MINUTE!

COMRADES! WE ARE VICTORIOUS!
HURRAHHH!
HURRAHHH!


AH, I SEE OUR NEW ALLIES HAVE COME TO JOIN IN OUR CELEBRATION!

SGT. ASHAAD, HELP THAT PILOT DOWN.

BY THE STARS... IT'S PRINCESS ISPLOURRDACARTHA!

AT LONG LAST, DEAR SISTER.
HURRAHH!
HURRAHH!

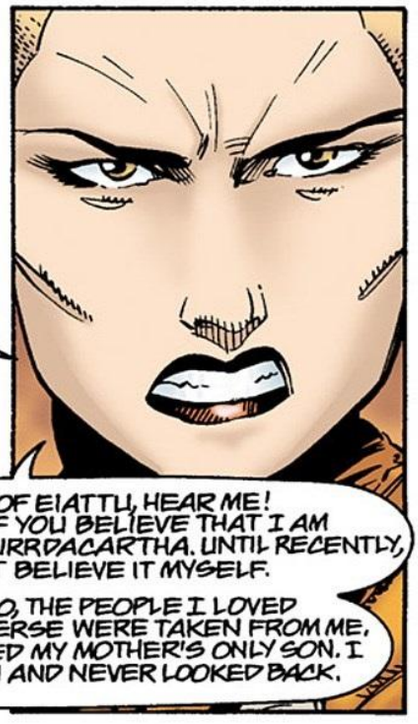
SO, YOU'RE THE MAN WHO CLAIMS TO BE MY BROTHER!
DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE ME, SISTER DEAR? HAS THE MEMORY OF MY BROTHERLY LOVE FADED?

OH, COME ON! I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT YOU'RE DEFINITELY NOT MY BROTHER!
LORD HARRAN, WATCH--
SGT. ASHAAD! THIS IS BETWEEN MY SISTER AND ME! NO ONE IS TO INTERFERE!

THIS MAN IS AN IMPOSTOR! A PLANT TO CREATE UNREST BETWEEN THE NOBLES AND THE CITIZENS OF EIATTU!
THE TRUE HARRAN DIED YEARS AGO ON THE NIGHT MY FAMILY WAS MURDERED!
HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS, SISTER DEAR? HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT I WAS KILLED THAT HORRIBLE NIGHT?

BECAUSE I KILLED YOU!
PRINCE HARRAN WAS MAD! AN ABOMINATION, CREATED FROM YEARS OF GENETIC TAMPERING!
PRINCE HARRAN WAS ALSO AN IMPERIAL SPY, CORRUPTED BY DARTH VADER HIMSELF!

MY POOR SISTER! IT SEEMS ALL THOSE YEARS ON THE RUN HAVE MUDDLED YOUR FRAGILE MIND! I ESCAPED THAT NIGHT, SPIRITED AWAY BY LOYALIST MEMBERS OF THE COURT, I--
WHO WERE THEY? WHERE ARE THEY NOW?!!
THEY... THEY WERE KILLED IN--


PEOPLE OF EIATTU, HEAR ME! I DON'T KNOW IF YOU BELIEVE THAT I AM PRINCESS ISPLOURRDACARTHA. UNTIL RECENTLY, I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT MYSELF.
YEARS AGO, THE PEOPLE I LOVED MOST IN THE UNIVERSE WERE TAKEN FROM ME. THAT NIGHT, I KILLED MY MOTHER'S ONLY SON. I RAN FROM EIATTU AND NEVER LOOKED BACK.

NOW I KNOW THAT YOU CAN NEVER RUN FROM YOUR HOME. EIATTU IS THE BIRTHWORLD OF MY FATHER AND MOTHER. OF MY ENTIRE FAMILY. EIATTU TOOK EVERYTHING I HAD AWAY FROM ME, YES.
BUT IT GAVE EVERYTHING TO ME, AS WELL. AND ALL THOSE THINGS, MY FAMILY AND THEIR LOVE ARE HERE, IN EVERY BLADE OF GRASS, IN ALL THE ROLLING HILLS...
...AND IN YOU GOOD PEOPLE.

THIS MAN HAS LEAD YOU TO VICTORY OVER THE IMPERIAL INVADERS, SOMETHING THAT NO LEADER OF EIATTU WAS ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH. BUT HE IS BUT A PAWN OF THE MOFF LEONIA TAVIRA.

LIES....

LIES!! I CAME BACK TO THIS PLANET TO SAVE MY PEOPLE FROM THE OPPRESSION OF THE NOBLES! TO BRING ABOUT A NEW AGE TO OUR WORLD.
WHAT HAS SHE DONE BUT COODLE THE PRIAMSTA AND THE IMPERIALS!
I LED YOU PEOPLE TO VICTORY! I--
--I ALMOST WISH THAT YOU WERE MY BROTHER. AT LEAST THEN I WOULD NOT HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE GUILT I'VE CARRIED ALL THESE YEARS.
BUT YOU'RE NOT MY BROTHER. YOU'RE A LIE, A FALSE HOPE TO A HELPLESS PEOPLE.
ONCE WE HAVE MOFF TAVIRA IN CUSTODY, WE CAN GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS AND FIND OUT JUST WHO YOU ARE.
GET BACK! SGT. ASHAAD, STOP HER!
B-BUT, MY LORD...
YOU SEE, THESE PEOPLE DON'T NEED US.
THIS IS THE STRENGTH OF EIATTU, NOT ITS LEADERS. ITS STRENGTH LIES IN ITS PEOPLE.
I SAID STAY BACK!!! STOP HER!!!
I--I AM PRINCE HARRAN ESTILLO! L-L-LEADER OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION BATTALION!!! I-I--
AND THAT RING, "BROTHER DEAR," JUST ISN'T YOU!

I SAID STAY BACK!!!
VRAPP!
COMRADE, NO--
VVRAPP!

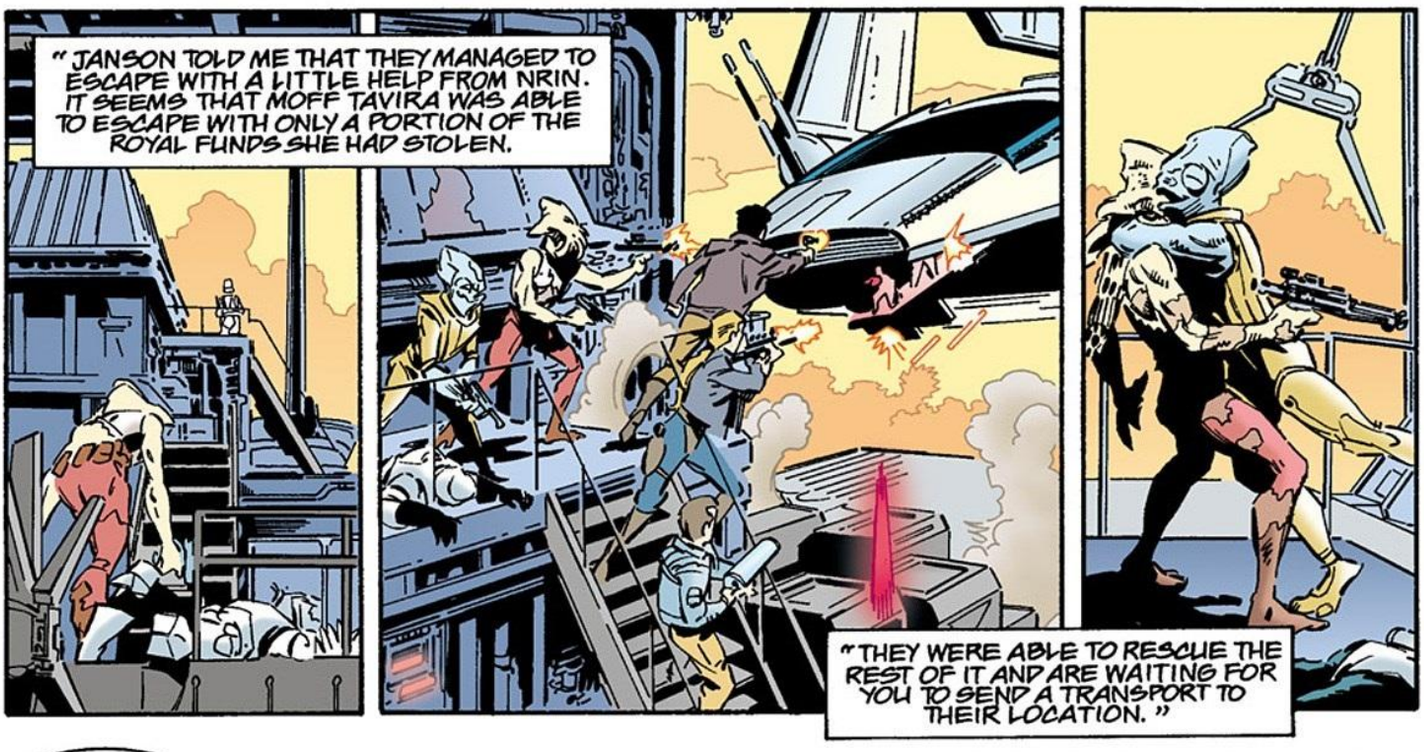
AAARGGG!!

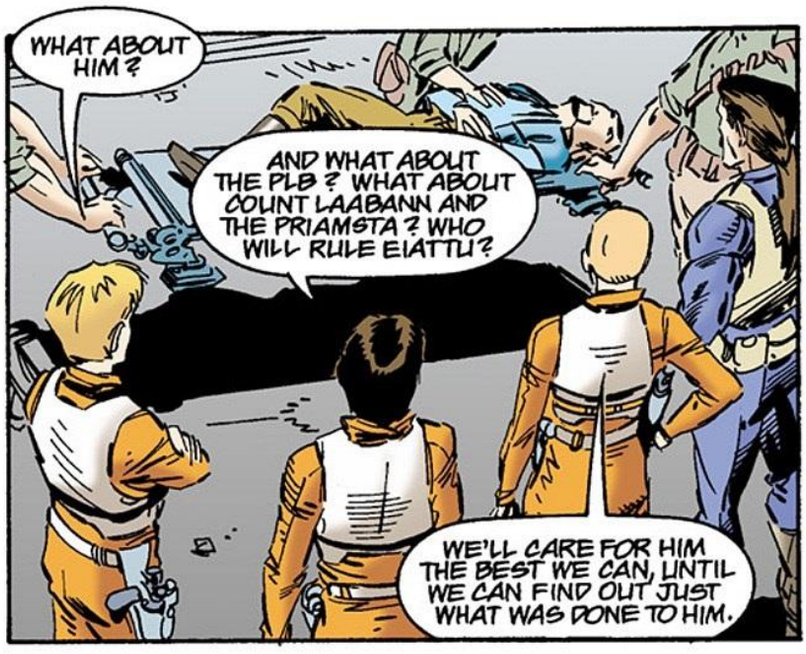
...gggrrrgglllgg... LEONIA... ggrrgglleee... help me...

...gggrrrlggg...
IT'S TRUE! HE WAS AN IMPOSTOR!
PLOURR!!!

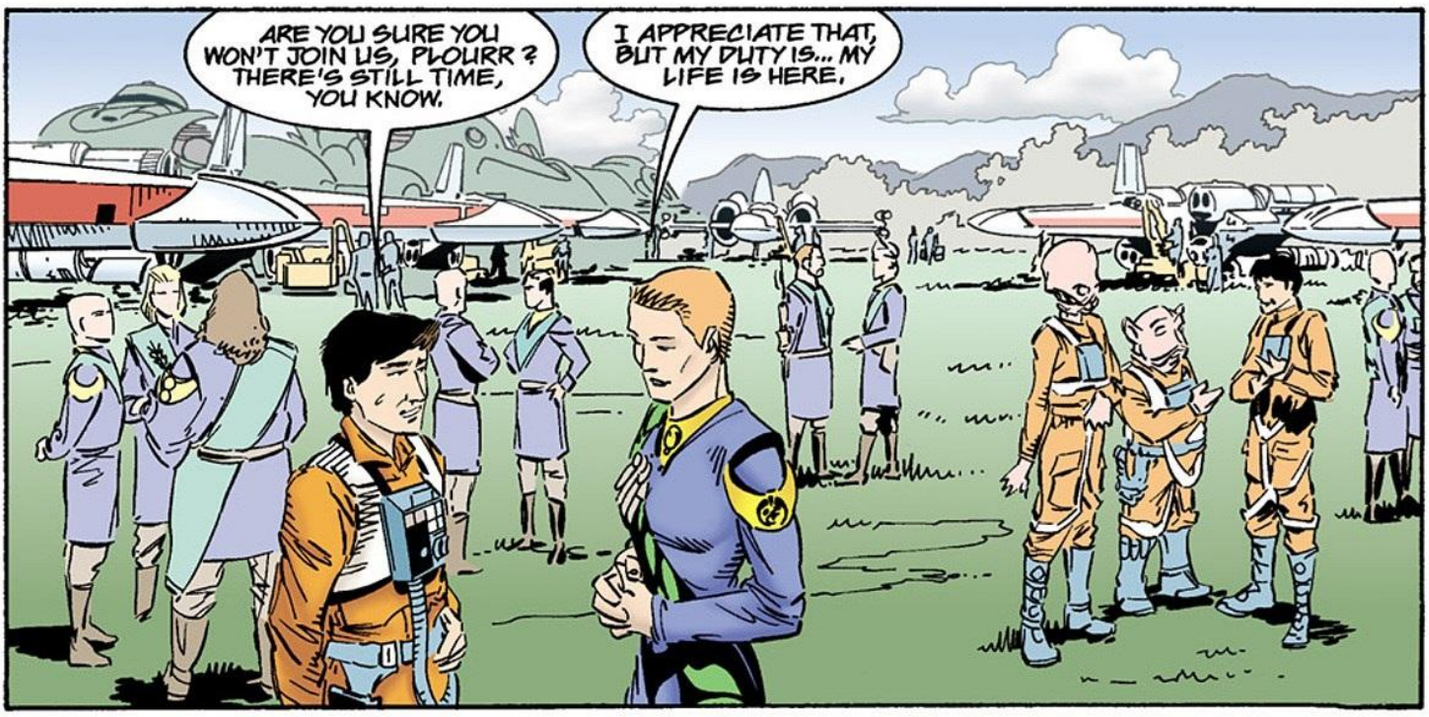
PLOURR, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES, RIAL. I'M FINE.
WE VAPED THE LAST OF THE TIES. THE CITADEL IS SECURE.

SO, THIS IS THE WOULD-BE PRINCE.
WEDGE, HAVE YOU HEARD FROM JANSON AND THE OTHERS?
I JUST GOT WORD FROM HIM. HE AND THE REST OF ROGUE SQUADRON WERE THE UNWILLING GUESTS OF THE MOFF.


"JANSON TOLD ME THAT THEY MANAGED TO ESCAPE WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM NRIN. IT SEEMS THAT MOFF TAVIRA WAS ABLE TO ESCAPE WITH ONLY A PORTION OF THE ROYAL FUNDS SHE HAD STOLEN.
"THEY WERE ABLE TO RESCUE THE REST OF IT AND ARE WAITING FOR YOU TO SEND A TRANSPORT TO THEIR LOCATION."


WHAT ABOUT HIM?
AND WHAT ABOUT THE PLB? WHAT ABOUT COUNT LAABANN AND THE PRIAMSTA? WHO WILL RULE EIATTU?
WE'LL CARE FOR HIM THE BEST WE CAN, UNTIL WE CAN FIND OUT JUST WHAT WAS DONE TO HIM.

AND AS FOR THE REST...

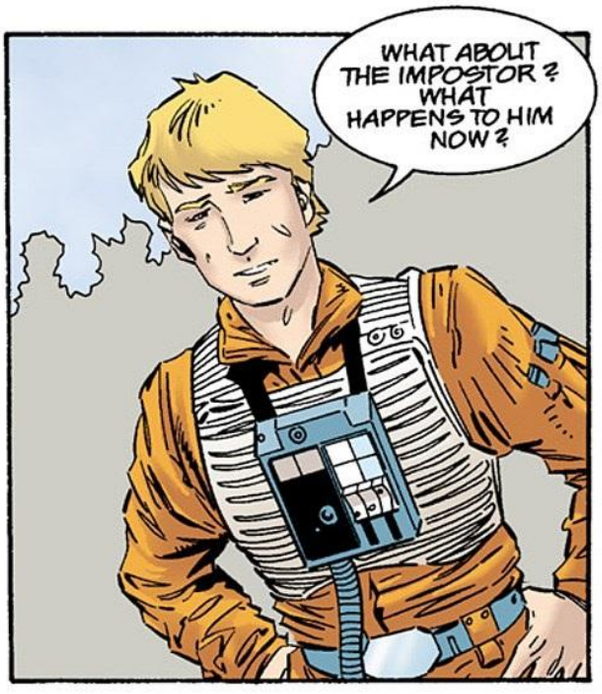

ARE YOU SURE YOU WON'T JOIN US, PLOURR? THERE'S STILL TIME, YOU KNOW.
I APPRECIATE THAT, BUT MY DUTY IS... MY LIFE IS HERE.

THIS WORLD BORE ME. NOW, *SHE* DESPERATELY NEEDS TO BE NURSED BACK TO STRENGTH.
PERHAPS AFTER THAT, WITH NEWFOUND UNITY, WE CAN THEN LEARN TO WALK TOGETHER.

"REGARDLESS OF WHERE THOSE STEPS MAY TAKE US, THE ACTIONS OF CERTAIN PARTIES WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN."

EVEN THOUGH MOFF TAVIRA GOT AWAY WITH A FAIR AMOUNT OF IMPERIAL BULLION, WE'LL DO OUR BEST TO TRACK HER DOWN FOR YOU--

NO NEED TO CONCERN YOURSELF WITH THAT. THE MAJORITY OF THE FUNDS ARE STILL IN MY POSSESSION.

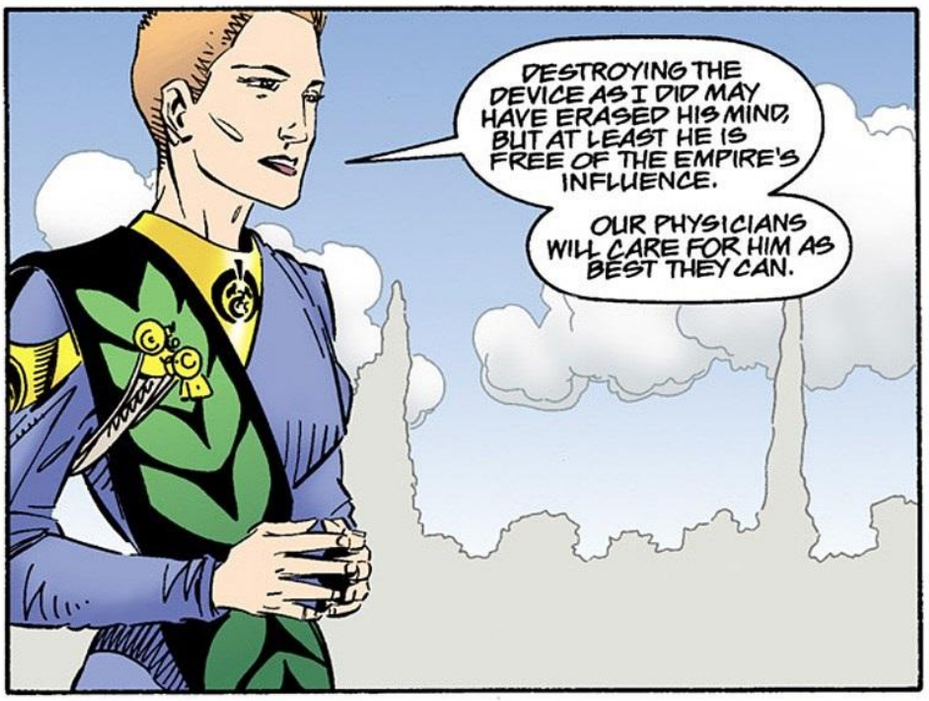

WHAT ABOUT THE IMPOSTOR? WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM NOW?

THE POOR SOUL...

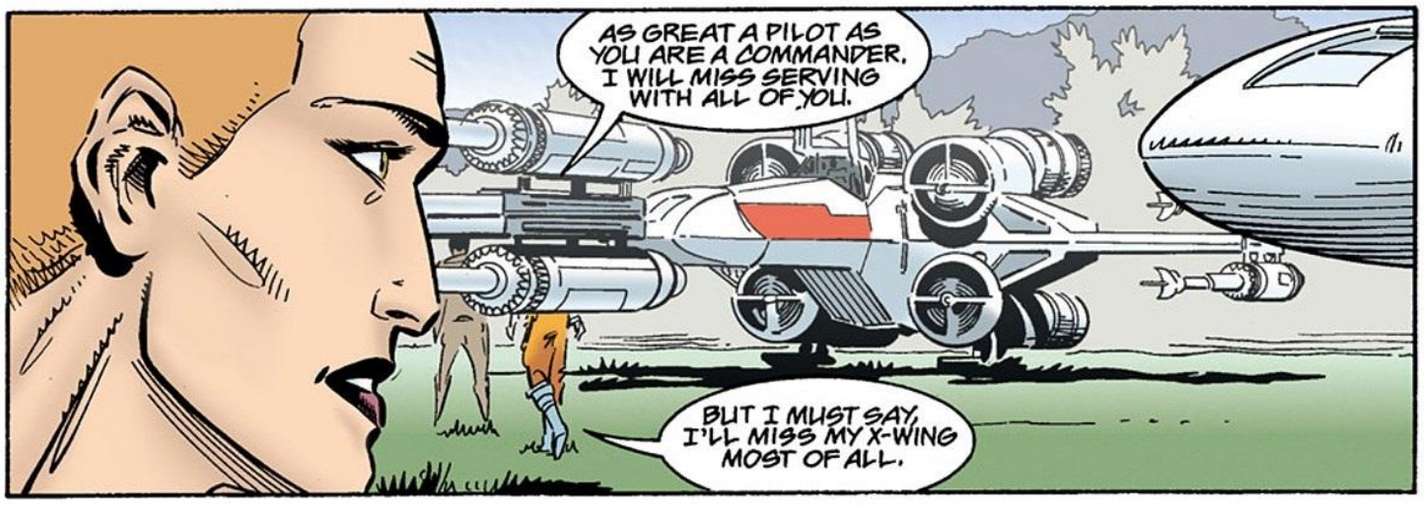
"WHATEVER MIND HE MAY HAVE POSSESSED BEFORE, EITHER HARRAN'S OR HIS OWN...
"...IS GONE NOW."

AS FAR AS OUR RESEARCHERS CAN DETERMINE, THE RING HE WORE WAS SOME KIND OF BRAIN-PROGRAMMING DEVICE.
CONTACT WITH IT SOMEHOW REINFORCED THE REAL HARRAN'S MEMORIES THAT HAD BEEN IMPLANTED INTO HIS MIND.

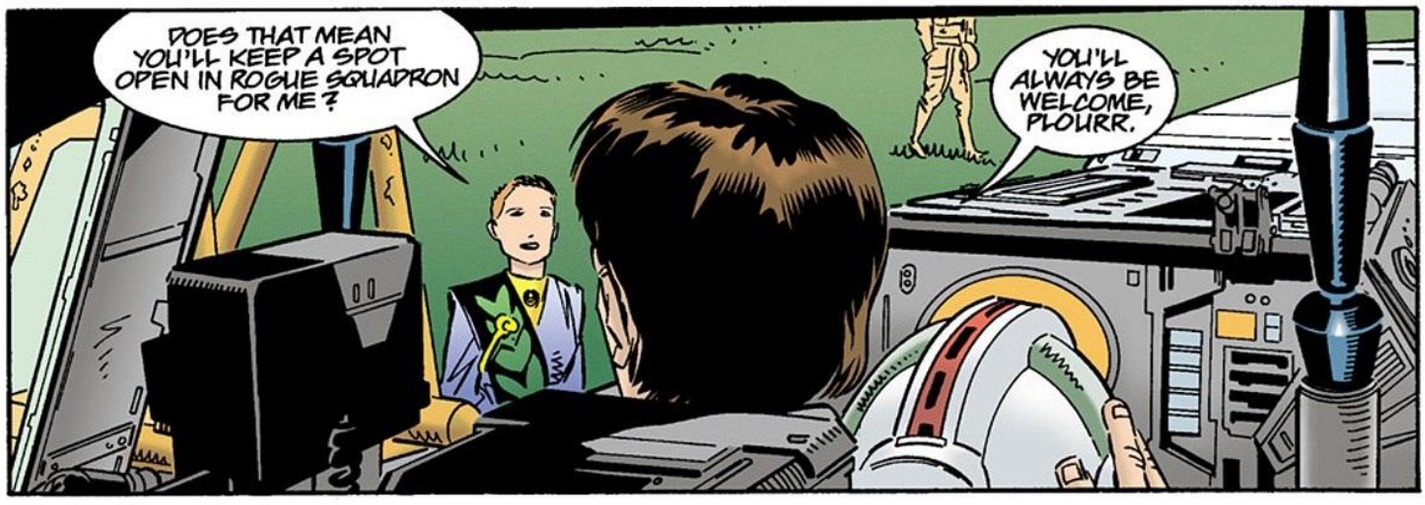
THE VERY IDEA OF SUCH A DEVICE IS UNMISTAKABLY VADER.


DESTROYING THE DEVICE AS I DID MAY HAVE ERASED HIS MIND, BUT AT LEAST HE IS FREE OF THE EMPIRE'S INFLUENCE.
OUR PHYSICIANS WILL CARE FOR HIM AS BEST THEY CAN.

PERHAPS A JEDI'S HELP, ONCE WE'VE OFFICIALLY JOINED THE ALLIANCE.
YOU'LL BE MISSED, PLOURR. YOU'RE A GREAT LEADER AND A DAMN GOOD PILOT.


AS GREAT A PILOT AS YOU ARE A COMMANDER, I WILL MISS SERVING WITH ALL OF YOU.
BUT I MUST SAY, I'LL MISS MY X-WING MOST OF ALL.

I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD MISS HER AT ALL. IF YOUR PLACE IS HERE, THEN SO IS HERS.
AFTER ALL, YOU MAY NEED HER.


DOES THAT MEAN YOU'LL KEEP A SPOT OPEN IN ROGUE SQUADRON FOR ME?
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE WELCOME, PLOURR.

"YOU'VE SAVED YOUR WORLD. WHEN YOU'RE READY, COME BACK AND SAVE THE REST OF US."
END

Requiem for a Rogue | illustration by Stuart Hiner

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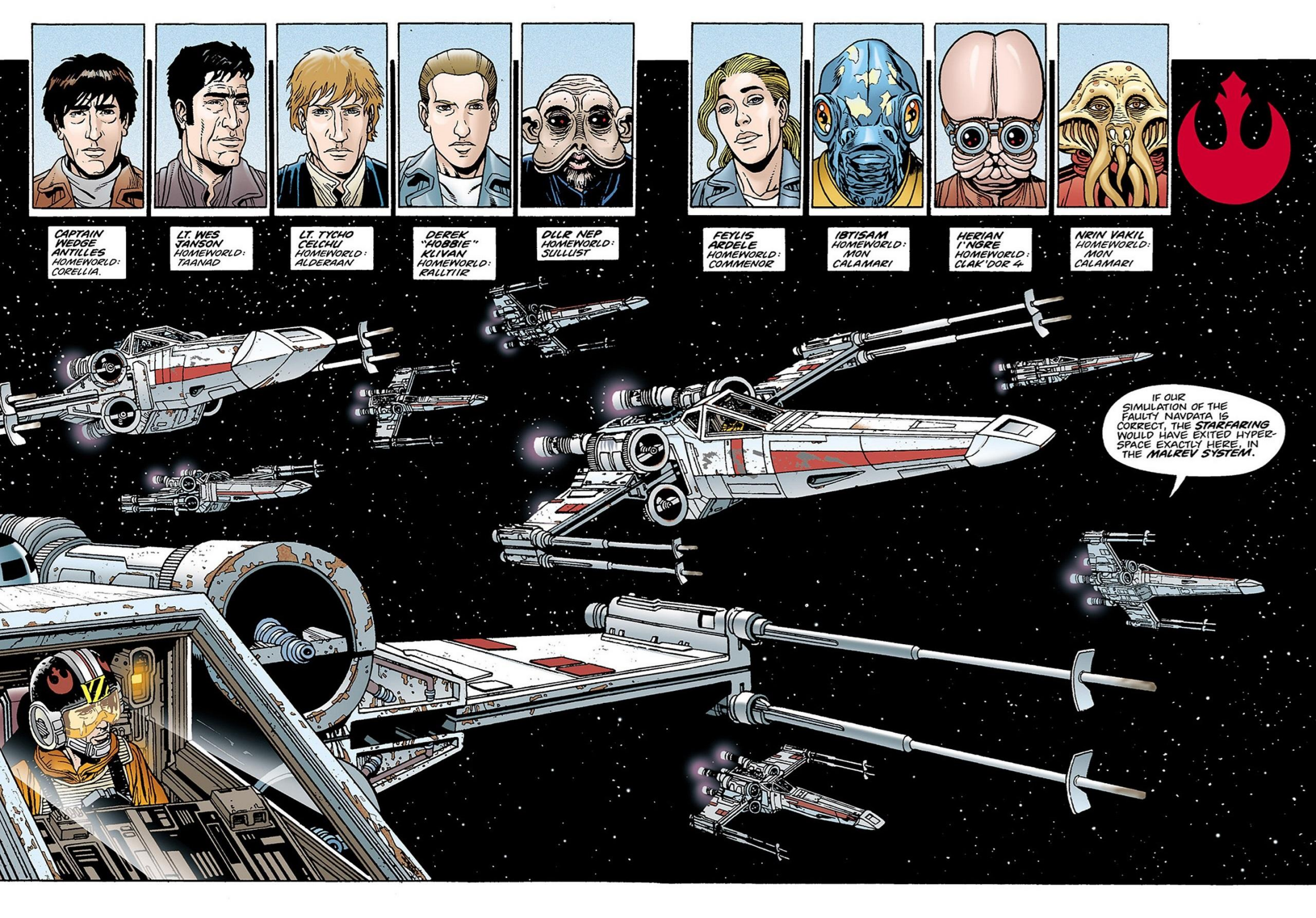
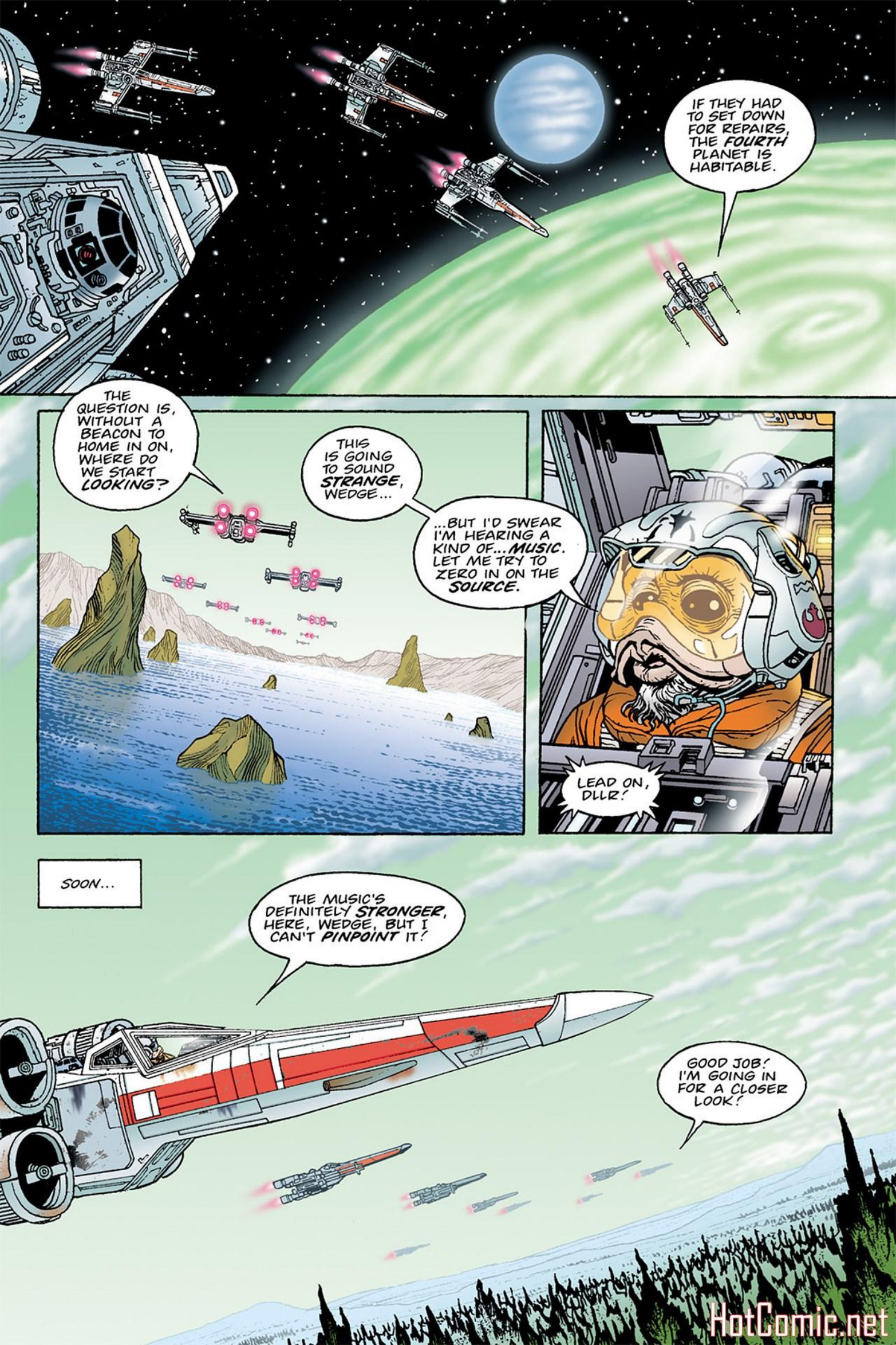
Approximately eight months after the Battle of Endor . . .

story by Michael A. Stackpole
script by Jan Strnad and Mike W. Barr
art by Gary Erskine
colors by Dave Nestelle
letters by Annie Parkhouse

ARE YOU SURE YOU WON'T COME WITH US, PLOURR?
WEDGE, AS MUCH AS I'D LOVE TO FLY AROUND WITH YOU AND A BUNCH OF RAW RECRUITS LOOKING FOR A MISSING SPACELINER OF BOTHAN TOURISTS, YOU KNOW THAT MY ROYAL DUTIES PREVENT IT.
FINDING ONE LOST SHIP IS LIKE LOOKING FOR A SEED IN A FIELD OF BANTHA DROPPINGS. ANY CLUES TO ITS DISAPPEARANCE?
OUR TECHS HAVE DISCOVERED A RARE BUG IN CERTAIN NAVIGATIONAL SOFTWARE THAT RESULTS IN RANDOM TRANSPOSITIONS OF COORDINATES.
IF THE SHIP WE'RE LOOKING FOR--THE STARFARING--TOOK A HEADING OF 247 DEGREES INSTEAD OF 274...
...WELL, THAT GIVES US A STARTING VECTOR. IT'LL PROBABLY BE A PRETTY UNEVENTFUL MISSION, MOSTLY A GET-ACQUAINTED TRIP FOR THE NEW ROGUES.
IF YOU DO RUN INTO TROUBLE, REMEMBER THAT YOU'RE NOW HONORARY CITIZENS OF EIATTU 6, AND THAT PUTS YOU UNDER MY PROTECTION.
UNEVENTFUL. HA, YOU'D THINK THAT I WOULD KNOW BETTER BY NOW.


CAPTAIN WEDGE ANTILLES HOMEWORLD: CORELLIA.
LT. WES JANSON HOMEWORLD: TAANAD
LT. TYCHO CELCHU HOMEWORLD: ALDERAAN
DEREK "HOBBIE" KLIVAN HOMEWORLD: RALLTIIR
DLLR NEP HOMEWORLD: SULLUST
FEYLIS ARDELE HOMEWORLD: COMMENOR
IBTISAM HOMEWORLD: MON CALAMARI
HERIAN I'NGRE HOMEWORLD: CLAK'DOR 4
NRIN VAKIL HOMEWORLD: MON CALAMARI
IF OUR SIMULATION OF THE FAULTY NAVDATA IS CORRECT, THE STARFARING WOULD HAVE EXITED HYPERSPACE EXACTLY HERE, IN THE MALREV SYSTEM.



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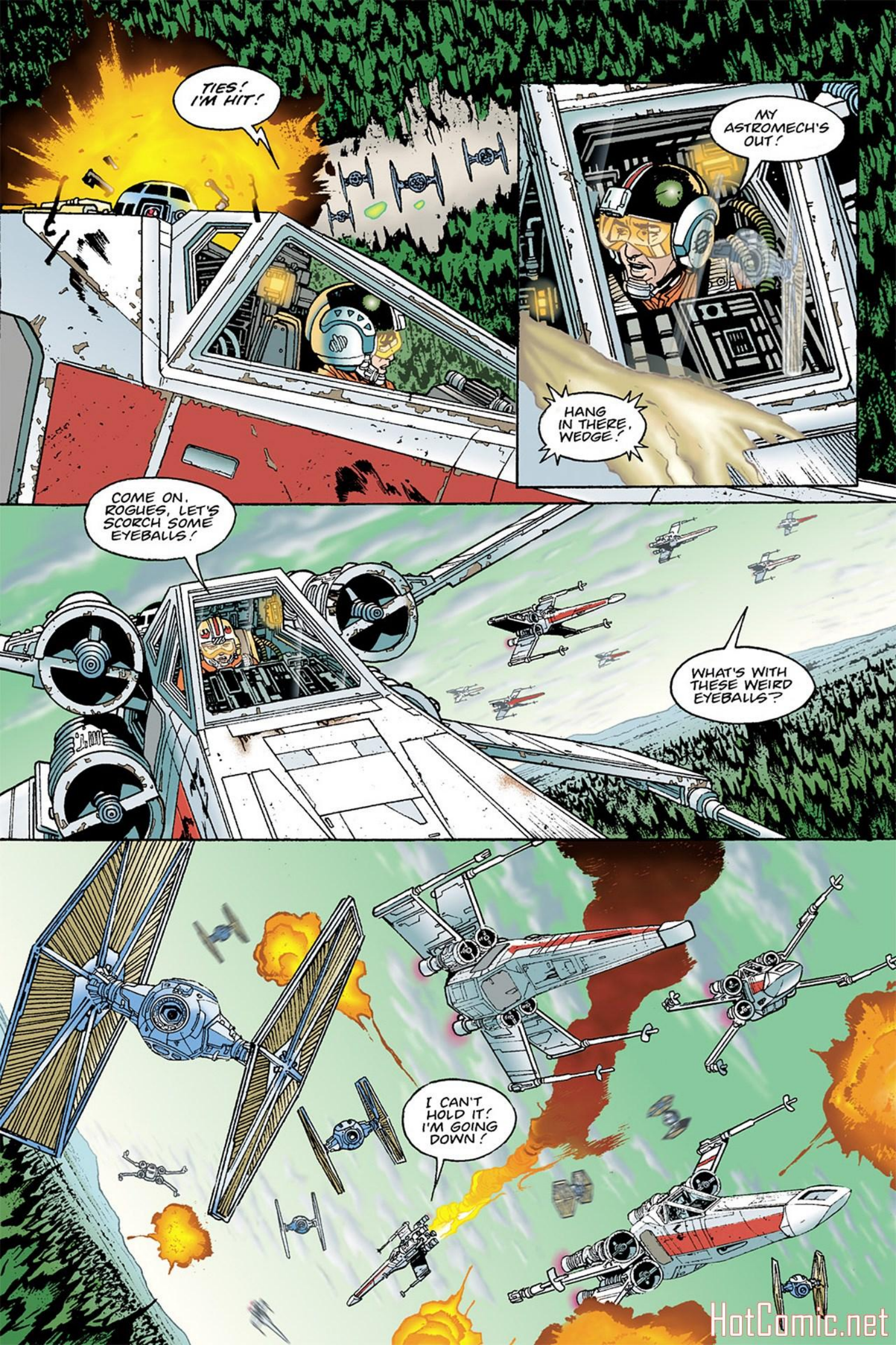

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WEDGE! WEDGE! COME IN!
DAMN IT, WEDGE! SPEAK TO ME!
WEDGE!
TYCHO! EYEBALL ON YOUR TAIL!
SOMETHING GOT HIM, BUT I CAN'T SEE WHAT!
TURBOLASER FROM THE GROUND, TYCHO! WE'VE GOT FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES!

THE SKIES ARE BLIND! DLLR -- CAN YOU SPOT WEDGE?
WE'LL HAVE TO GO IN ON FOOT, BUT FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS...
DON'T SAY IT, DLLR!
THERE'S A CLEARING ABOUT TWO KLICKS FROM THE CRASH SITE! WE'LL LAUNCH A SEARCH PARTY FROM THERE!
AND FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

...I THINK WE'VE FOUND OUR MISSING SPACELINER!
WHAT DO WE TELL THEM OF OUR MISSION, GIROV?
ALL THEY NEED TO KNOW--NOTHING!
I UNDERSTAND YOUR EAGERNESS TO FIND THE BODY OF YOUR CAPTAIN, BUT--
CAPTAIN ANTILLES MAY STILL BE ALIVE, GIROV. I'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T REFER TO HIM AS A CORPSE.
YES. OF COURSE. WHATEVER THE CASE...
...WE'LL BEGIN THE SEARCH TOMORROW AT FIRST LIGHT. WE CAN DO NOTHING UNTIL THEN. GET SOME SLEEP, LIEUTENANT.
YOU SAY THE STARFARING SUFFERED CATASTROPHIC SYSTEM FAILURES AS YOU LEFT HYPERSPACE, GIROV...
...WITH YOUR PERMISSION, I'LL TAKE A LOOK. THERE'S A CHANCE I CAN PATCH TOGETHER A FIX.
I'D APPRECIATE THE EXPERTISE OF A BITH. OUR OWN ENGINEERS WERE AMONG OUR FIRST CASUALTIES.

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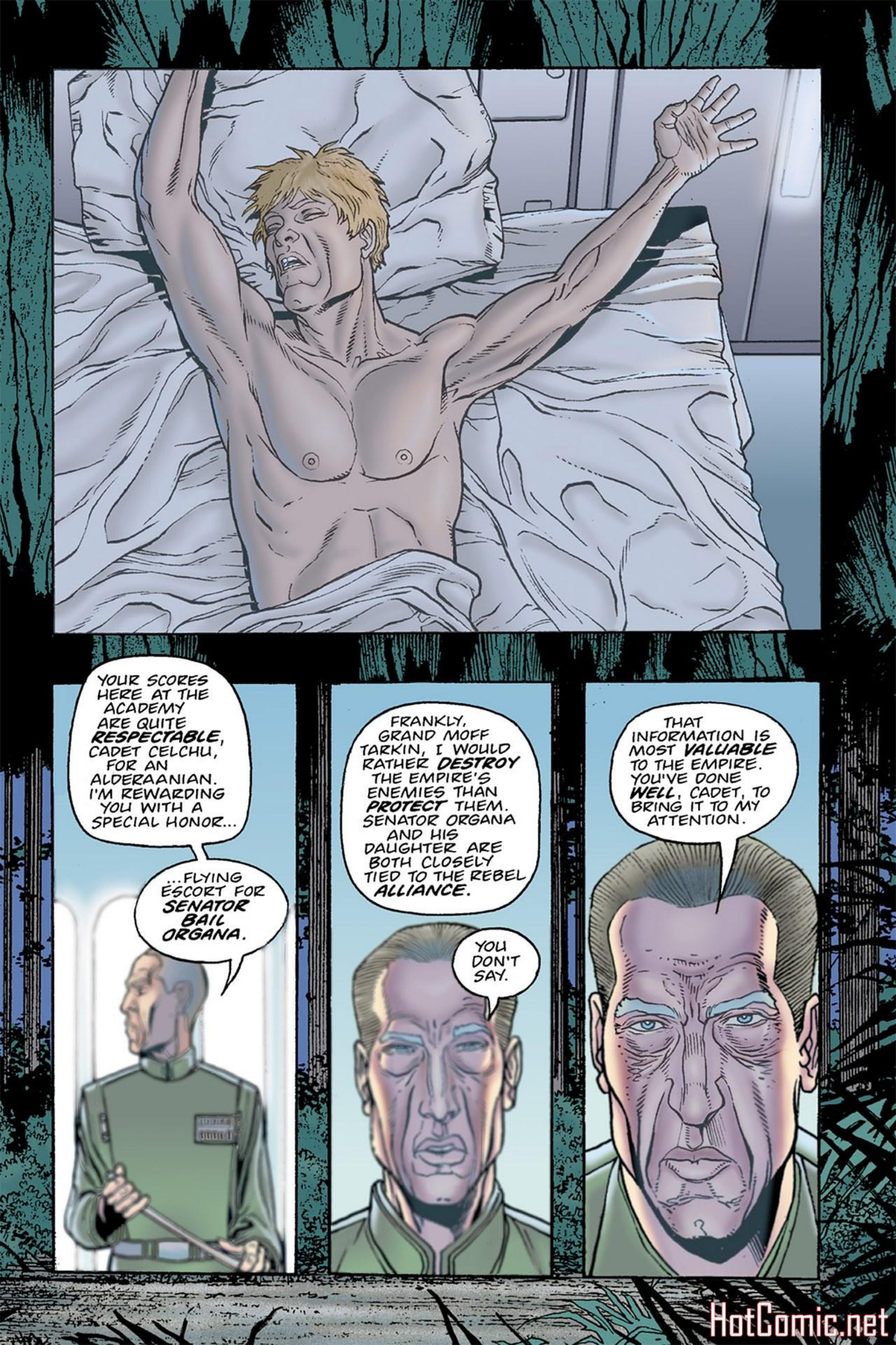

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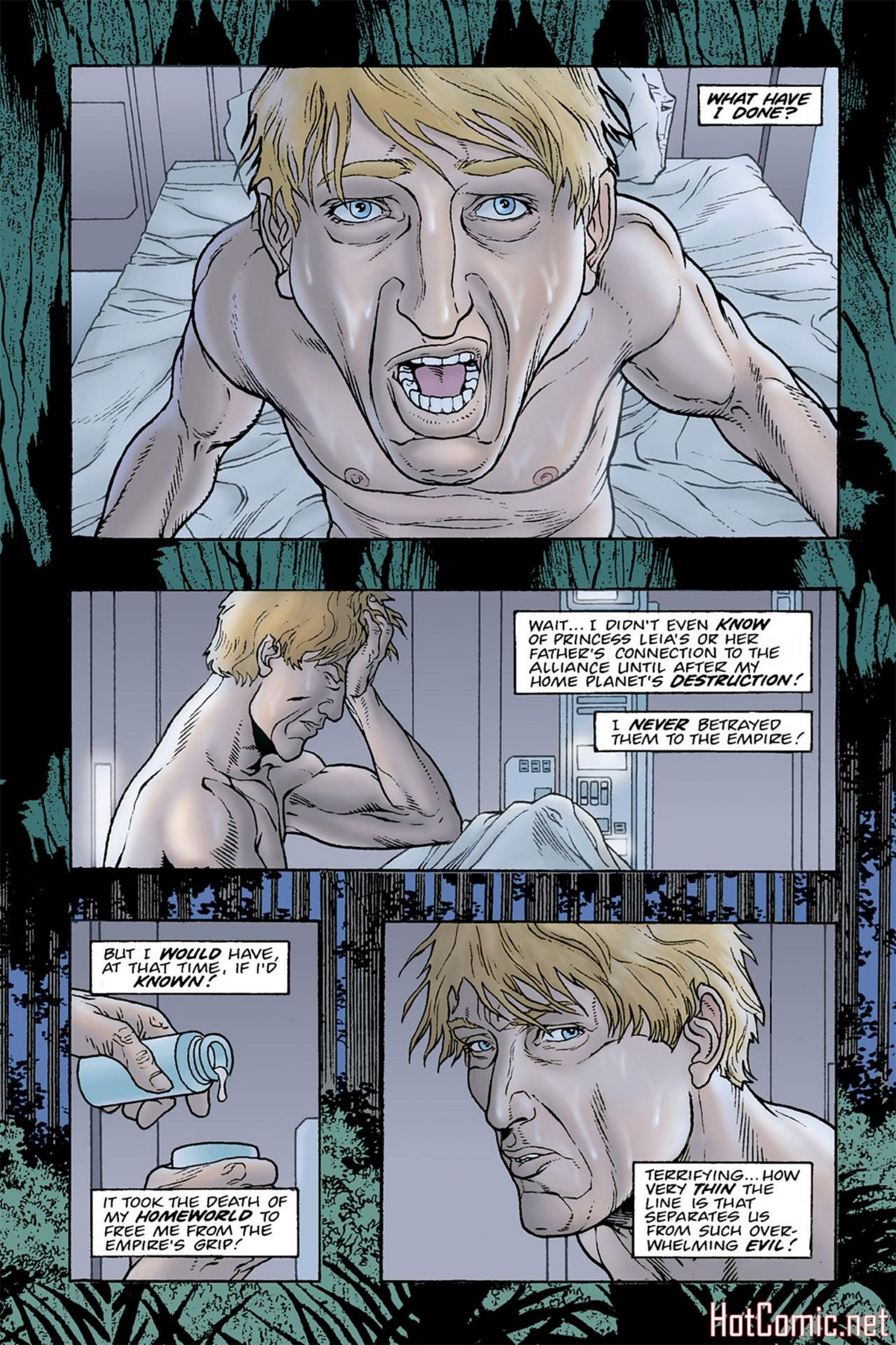

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LISTEN!
WAAAEEEEIIII!
WAAAEEEEIIII!
AM I MISTAKEN, OR DID WE JUST GET THE STUFFING BEAT OUT OF US BY A GANG OF BOTHAN TOURISTS?
BOTHANS... YES. TOURISTS... NOT BY A LONG SHOT!
IF THAT UNHOLY WAIL HAS THEM WORRIED, I SUGGEST WE FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE!
COME ON, DLLR!
THE MUSIC... SO LOUD! SURELY EVEN YOU CAN HEAR IT NOW!

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FILL THE AIR WITH THE MELODY OF RAGE!
LET THE POWER OF MY MIND GUIDE YOU! YOURS IS THE MUSCLE, BUT MINE IS THE WILL!
AS FOR YOU, PILOT...
...YOU WILL DO NOTHING! AFTER ALL I'VE DONE TO RETURN YOU FROM THE BRINK OF DEATH, IT WOULD BE A SHAME IF I HAD TO KILL YOU AGAIN!

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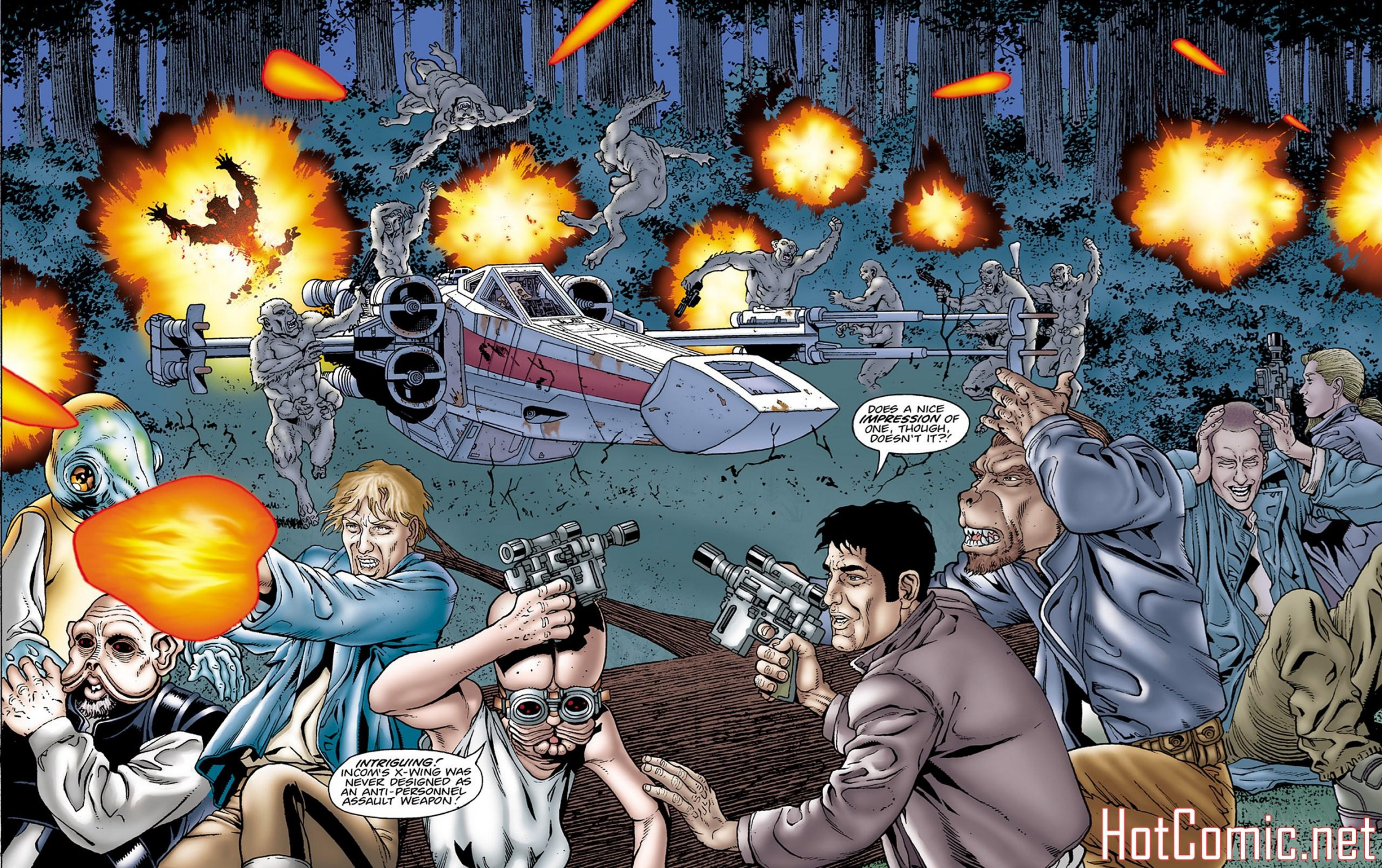

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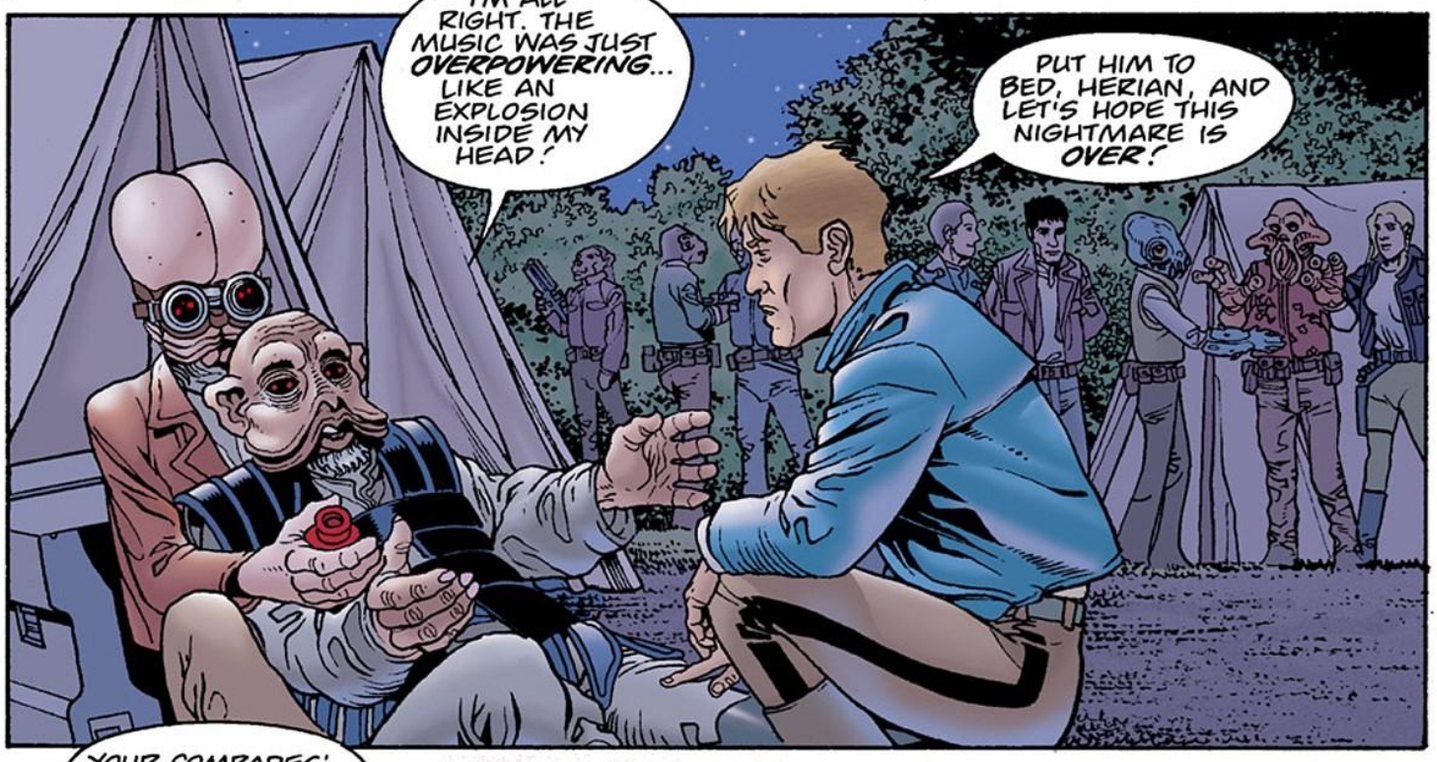

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THEY ONLY DELAY THEIR INEVITABLE DESTRUCTION. YOU SEE THE ARMAMENT AT MY DISPOSAL.
EMPEROR PALPATINE RECOGNIZED THIS TEMPLE AS A FOCAL POINT OF SITH MAGIC! IT WAS SLATED TO BECOME A MAJOR OUTPOST OF THE EMPIRE!
WHEN PALPATINE FELL, THE EMPIRE ABANDONED THE TEMPLE. THOSE WHO WERE STATIONED HERE FOUND ITS INFLUENCE DISTURBING!

"I WAS A LOWLY TECH AT THE TIME, BUT I STAYED BEHIND TO ALLY MYSELF WITH THE MAGIC OF THE SITH!

"I USED THE POWER OF THE TEMPLE TO BEND THE NATIVE IRRUKIINE TO MY WILL...

"...EXPANDING MY ABILITIES UNTIL I COULD GUIDE THEM IN ELABORATE WAR GAMES FUELED BY THEIR NATURAL AGGRESSION!"

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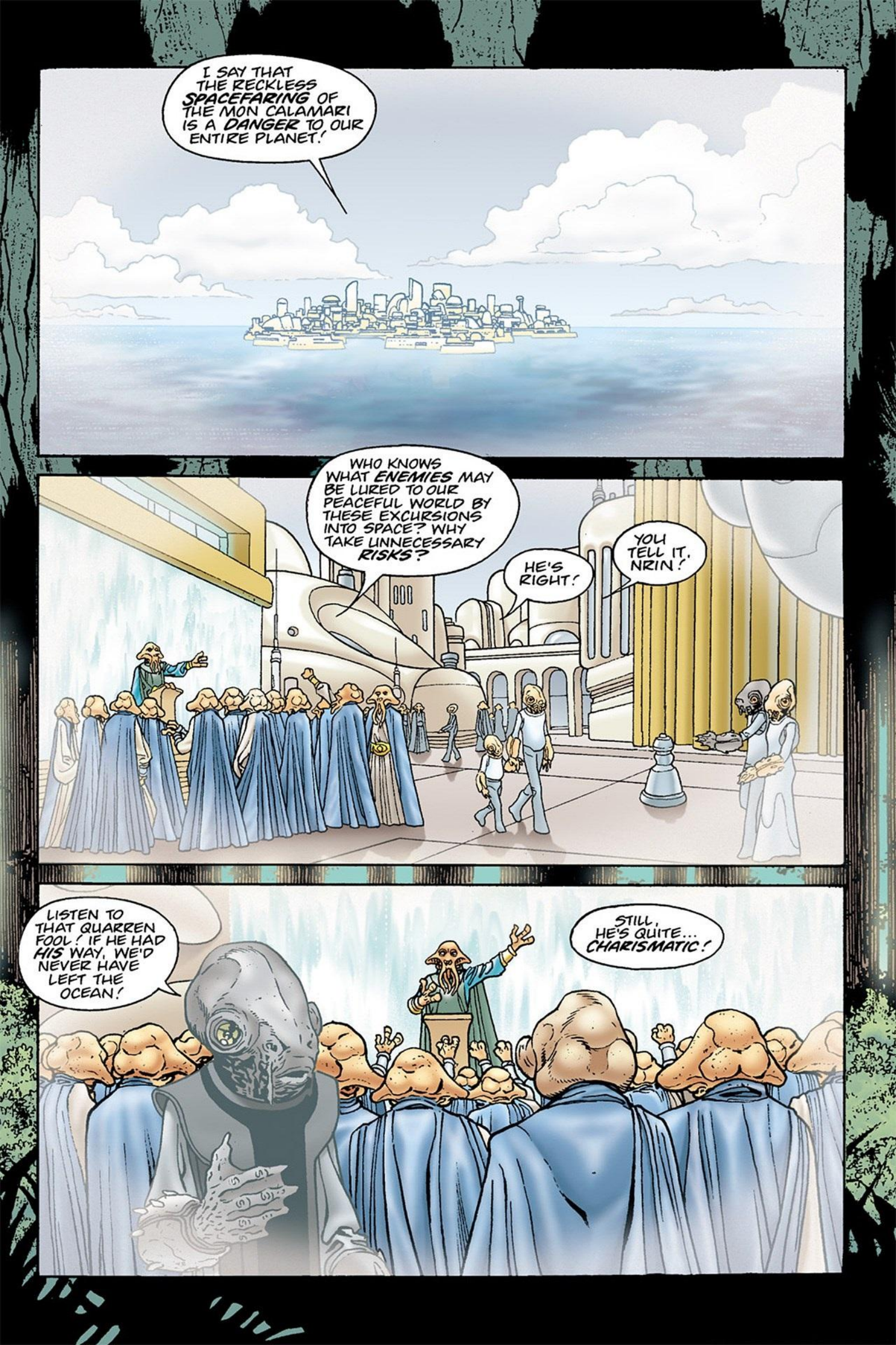
I SAY THAT THE RECKLESS SPACEFARING OF THE MON CALAMARI IS A DANGER TO OUR ENTIRE PLANET!
WHO KNOWS WHAT ENEMIES MAY BE LURED TO OUR PEACEFUL WORLD BY THESE EXCURSIONS INTO SPACE? WHY TAKE UNNECESSARY RISKS?
HE'S RIGHT!
YOU TELL IT, NRIN!
LISTEN TO THAT QUARREN FOOL! IF HE HAD HIS WAY, WE'D NEVER HAVE LEFT THE OCEAN!
STILL, HE'S QUITE... CHARISMATIC!

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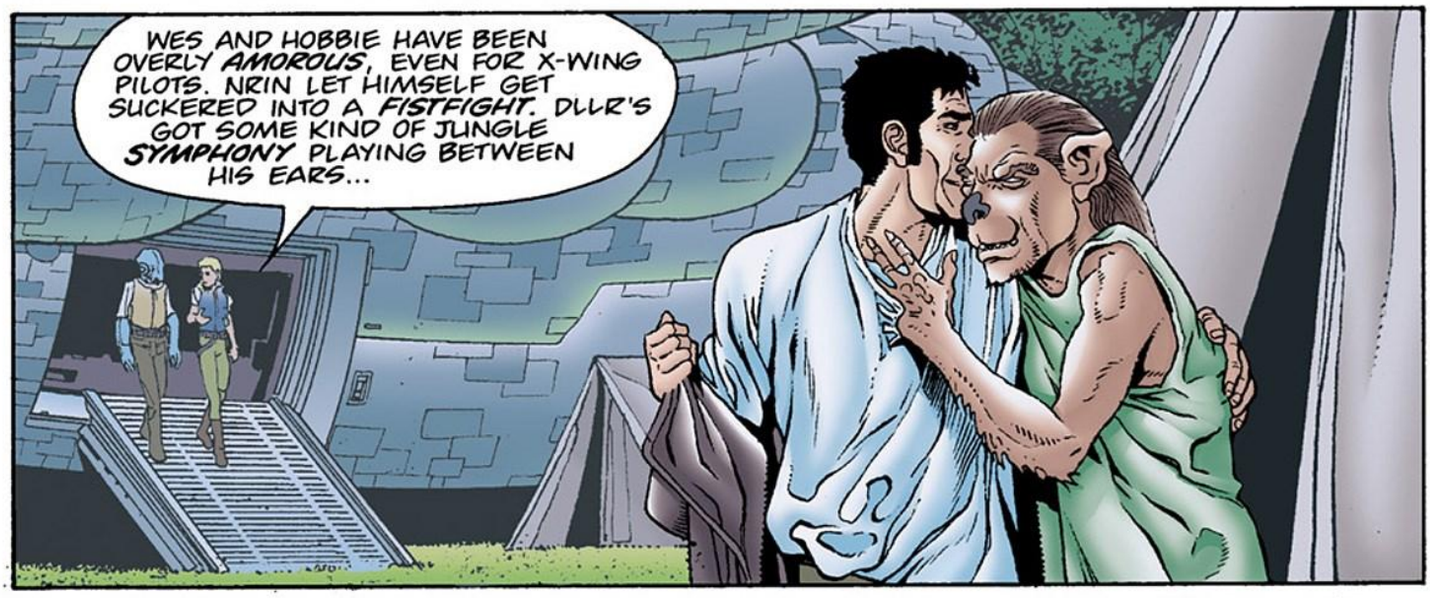

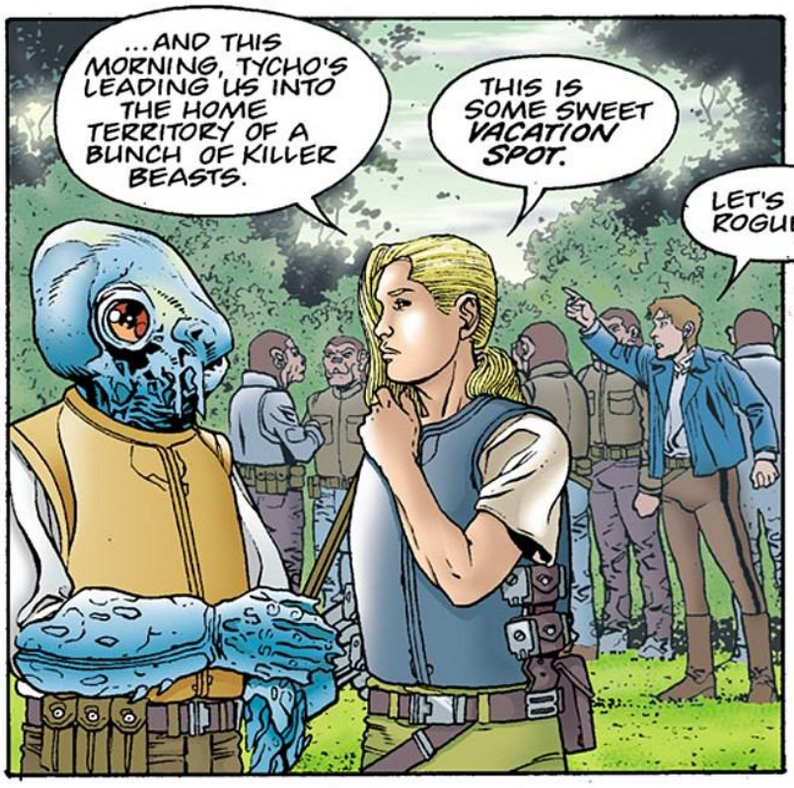

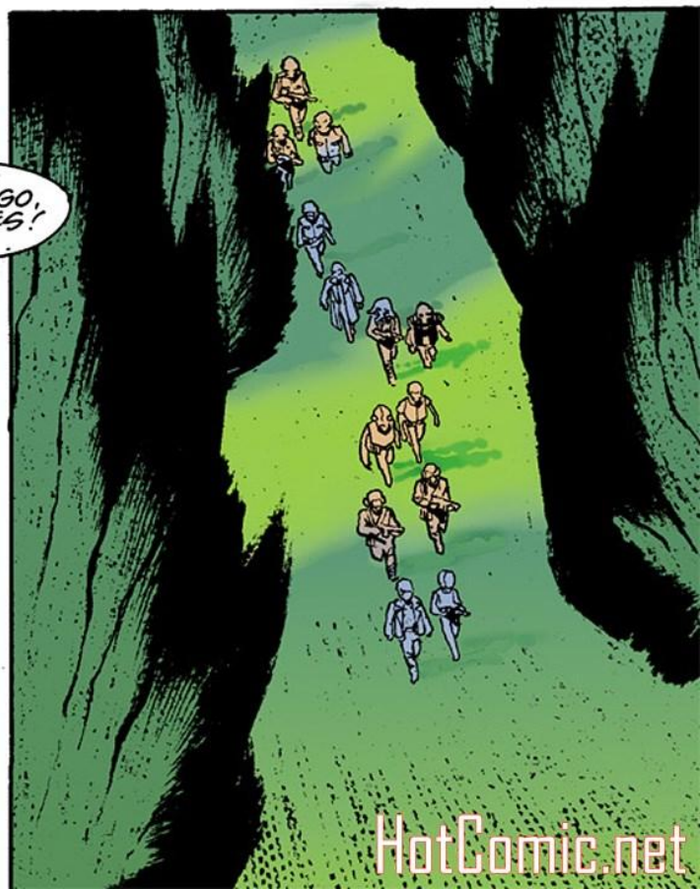

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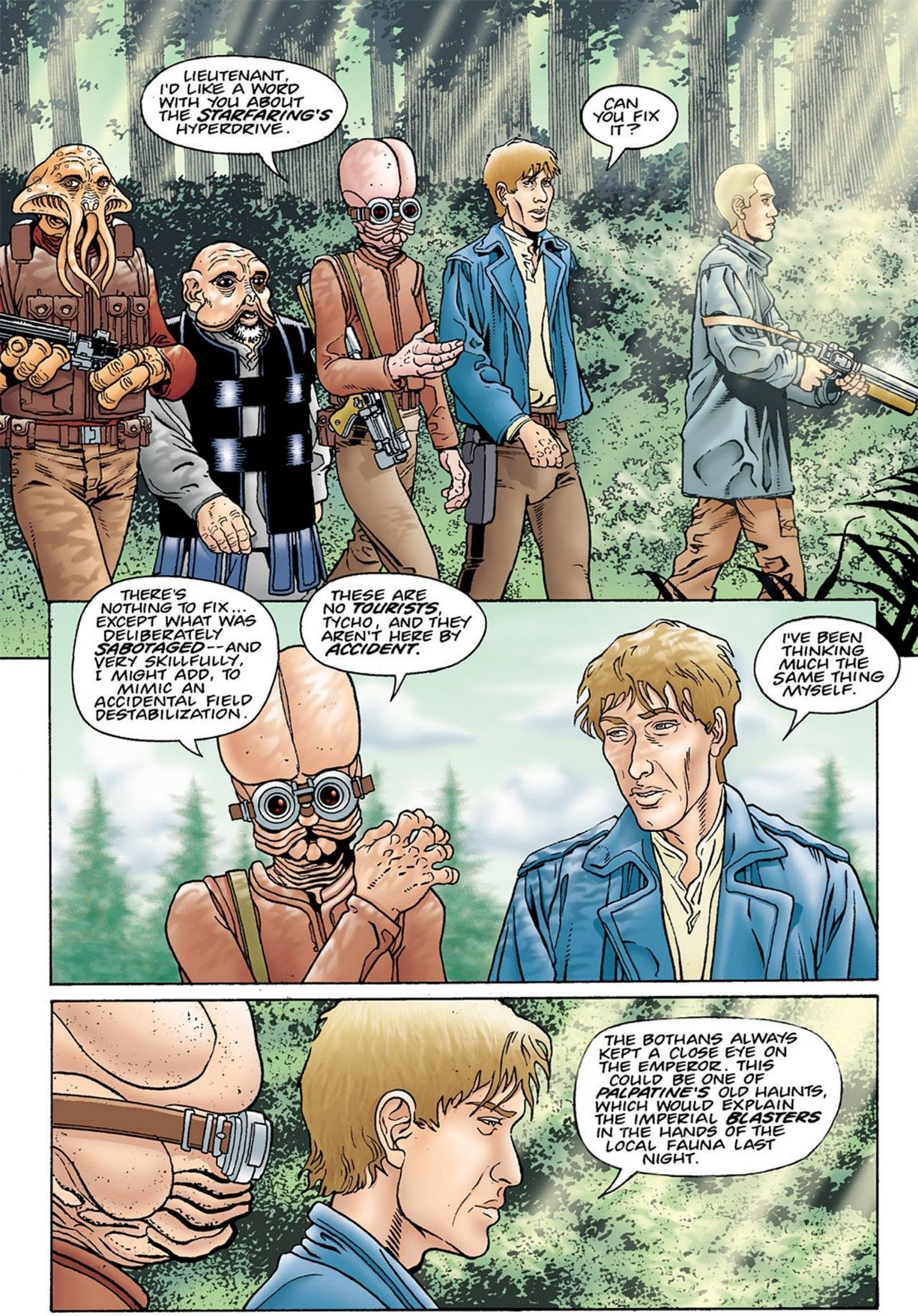
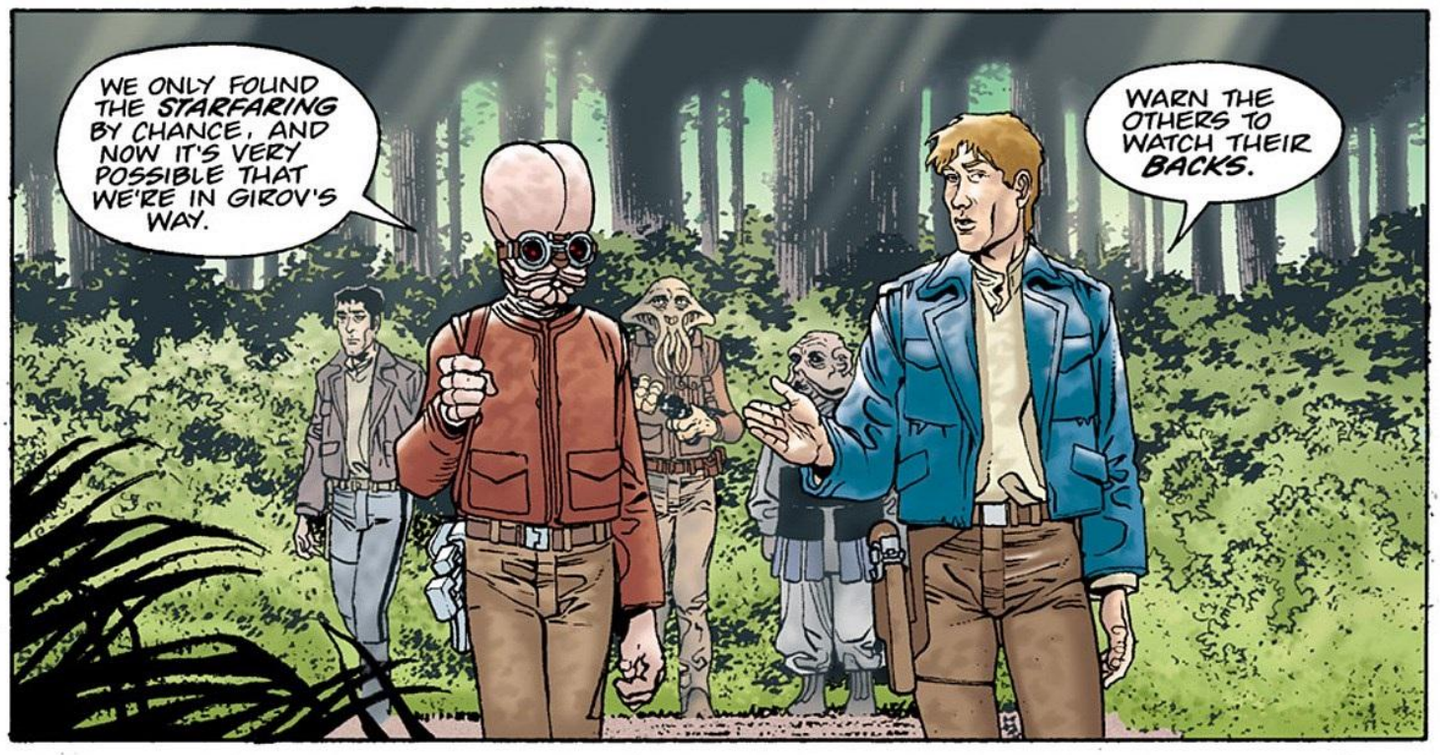

LIEUTENANT, I'D LIKE A WORD WITH YOU ABOUT THE STARFARING'S HYPERDRIVE.
CAN YOU FIX IT?
THERE'S NOTHING TO FIX... EXCEPT WHAT WAS DELIBERATELY SABOTAGED--AND VERY SKILLFULLY, I MIGHT ADD, TO MIMIC AN ACCIDENTAL FIELD DESTABILIZATION.
THESE ARE NO TOURISTS, TYCHO, AND THEY AREN'T HERE BY ACCIDENT.
I'VE BEEN THINKING MUCH THE SAME THING MYSELF.
THE BOTHANS ALWAYS KEPT A CLOSE EYE ON THE EMPEROR. THIS COULD BE ONE OF PALPATINE'S OLD HAUNTS, WHICH WOULD EXPLAIN THE IMPERIAL BLASTERS IN THE HANDS OF THE LOCAL FAUNA LAST NIGHT.


WE ONLY FOUND THE STARFARING BY CHANCE, AND NOW IT'S VERY POSSIBLE THAT WE'RE IN GIROV'S WAY.
WARN THE OTHERS TO WATCH THEIR BACKS.

THIS ISN'T THE PROPER VECTOR TO REACH CAPTAIN ANTILLES' CRASH SITE.
NO, BUT IT IS LEADING US TO THE SOURCE OF THE MUSIC!

I CAN LITERALLY SEE THE MUSIC NOW, NRIN! IT'S SPECTACULAR!

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IRRUKIINE! DEFENSE FORMATION!
THEY KNEW WE WERE COMING... LAY IN WAIT... AND MOUNTED A COORDINATED ATTACK!
SOMEONE'S GUIDING THEIR MOVES, DOING THEIR THINKING FOR THEM!
I QUITE AGREE, LIEUTENANT!
NOW'S MY CHANCE TO ESCAPE, WHILE THE BATTLE COMMANDS THE DEVARONIAN'S FULL ATTENTION!

FOR ONCE, MY INSENSITIVITY TO SUPRANORMAL ENERGIES LIKE SITH MAGIC AND THE FORCE WORKED IN MY FAVOR!
OTHERS IN ROGUE SQUADRON MAY BE MORE VULNERABLE! I HAVE TO WARN THEM!
WHY ISN'T ANYTHING EVER EASY?!
NO BLASTER, OF COURSE. OKAY, LET'S SEE HOW HE LIKES THE TASTE OF...
...A FULLY CHARGED POWER PACK!

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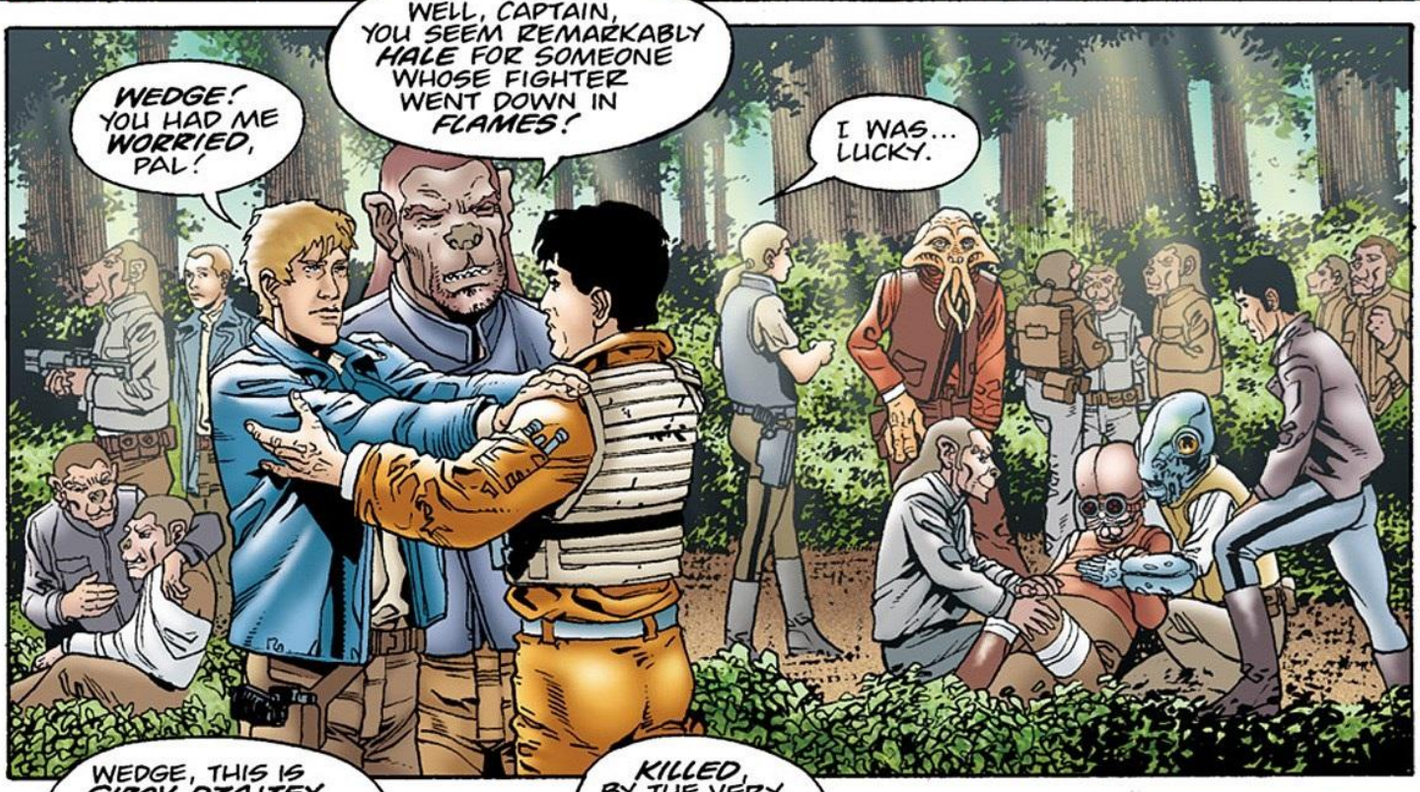
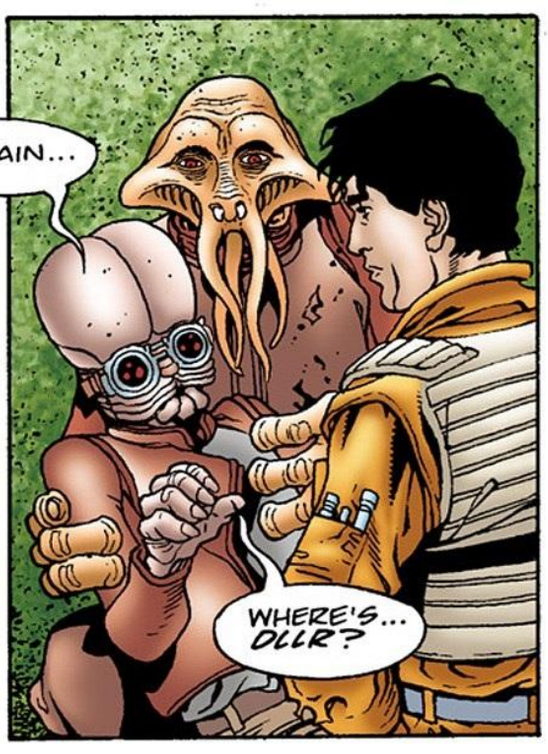
GNNN!
HOBBIE!
HOBBIE, CAN YOU WALK?!
I'M... FINE. HELP HERIAN!
SURE, YOU'RE FINE-- LIKE A SPEEDER WRECK!
HELP IS ON THE WAY FOR HERIAN. COME ON... LEAN ON ME!
THEY'VE CUT US OFF FROM THE OTHERS!
EVERYBODY, DOWN!
WEDGE! YOU'RE ALIVE!

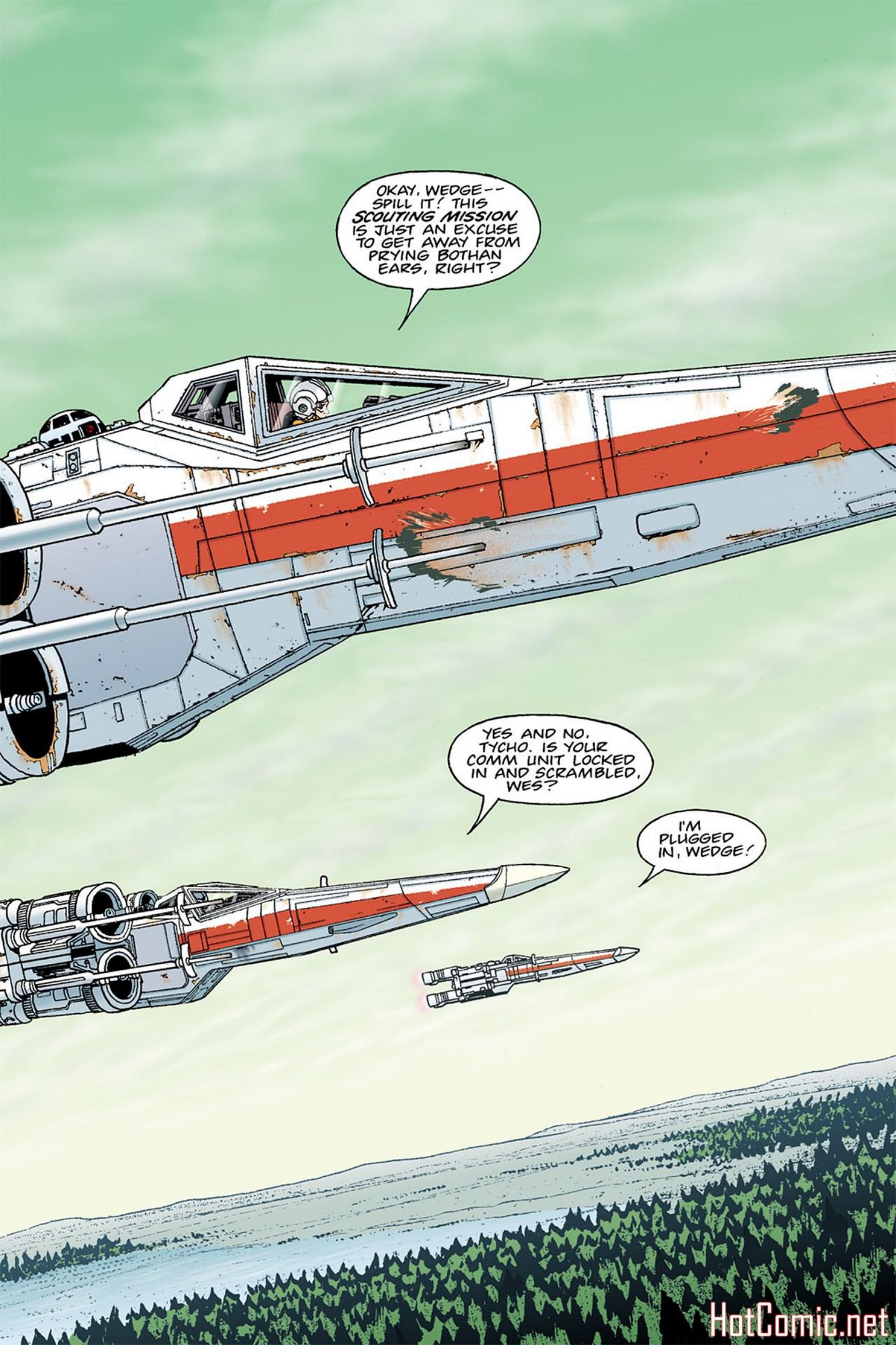
YEAH, AND YOU CAN KEEP ME THAT WAY BY MOVING YOUR BEHINDS!
THESE IMP BLASTERS I PICKED UP ARE RUNNING LOW ON CHARGE!


WEDGE! YOU HAD ME WORRIED, PAL!
WELL, CAPTAIN, YOU SEEM REMARKABLY HALE FOR SOMEONE WHOSE FIGHTER WENT DOWN IN FLAMES!
I WAS... LUCKY.

WEDGE, THIS IS GIROV DZA'TEY. HE COMMANDS THE BOTHANS ON THE STARFARING.
AND THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN?
KILLED, BY THE VERY BEASTS WHO ATTACKED YOUR SEARCH PARTY.


CAPTAIN...
WHERE'S... OLLR?

SO YOU'RE THE ONE.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT YOUR WOUNDS--I'VE HEALED MUCH WORSE. JUST RELAX...
...AND LISTEN TO THE MUSIC!



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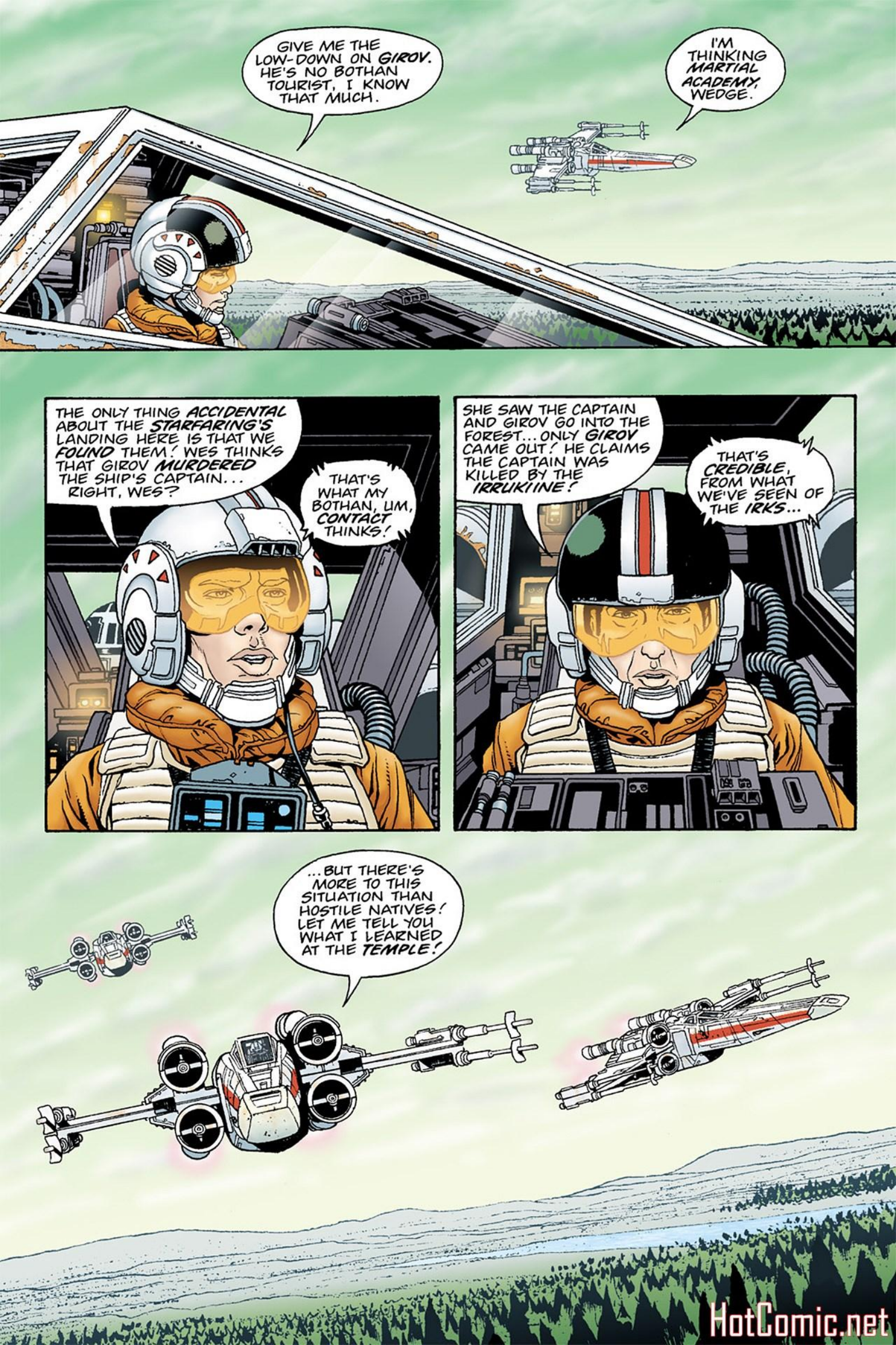

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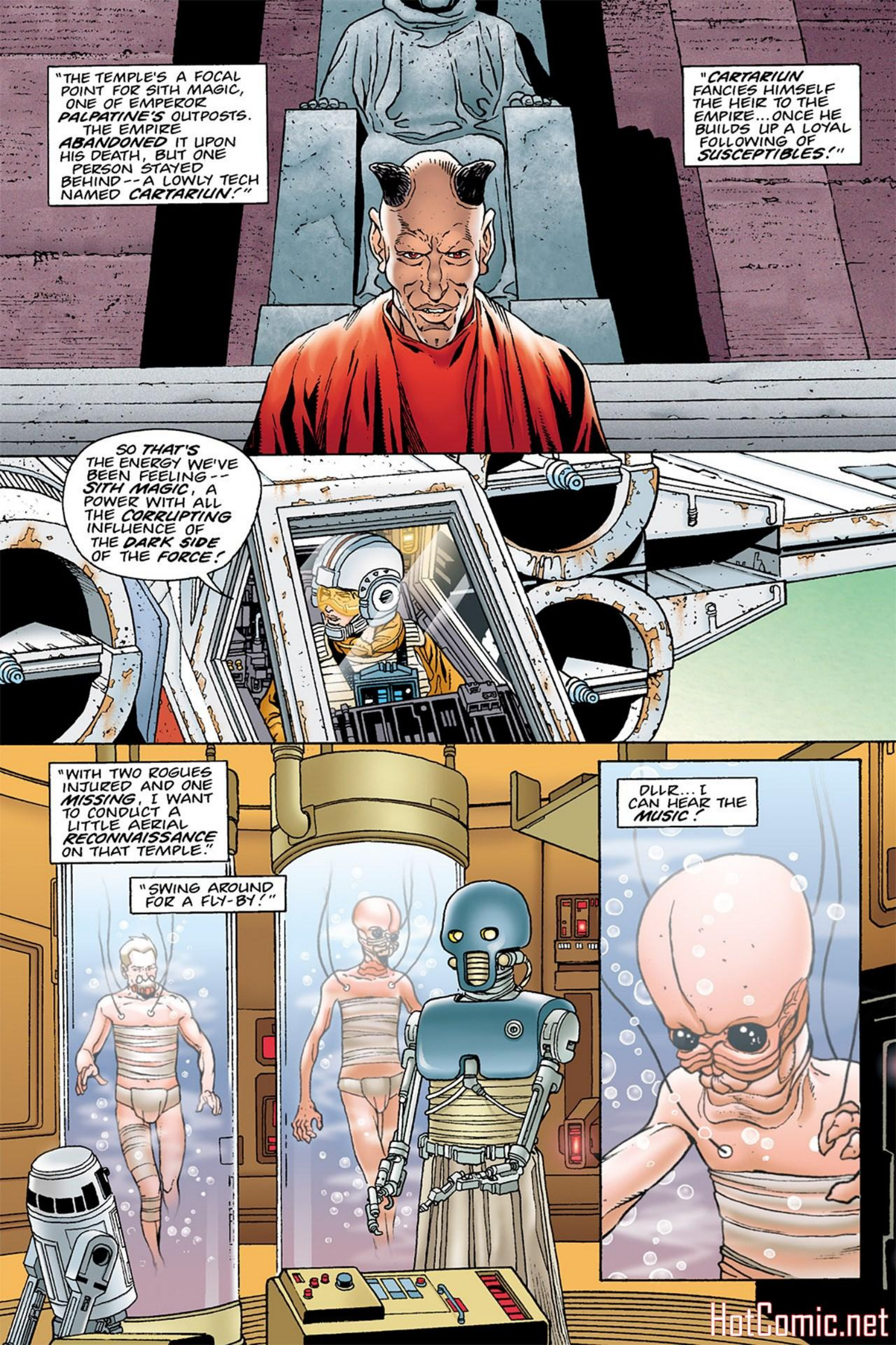

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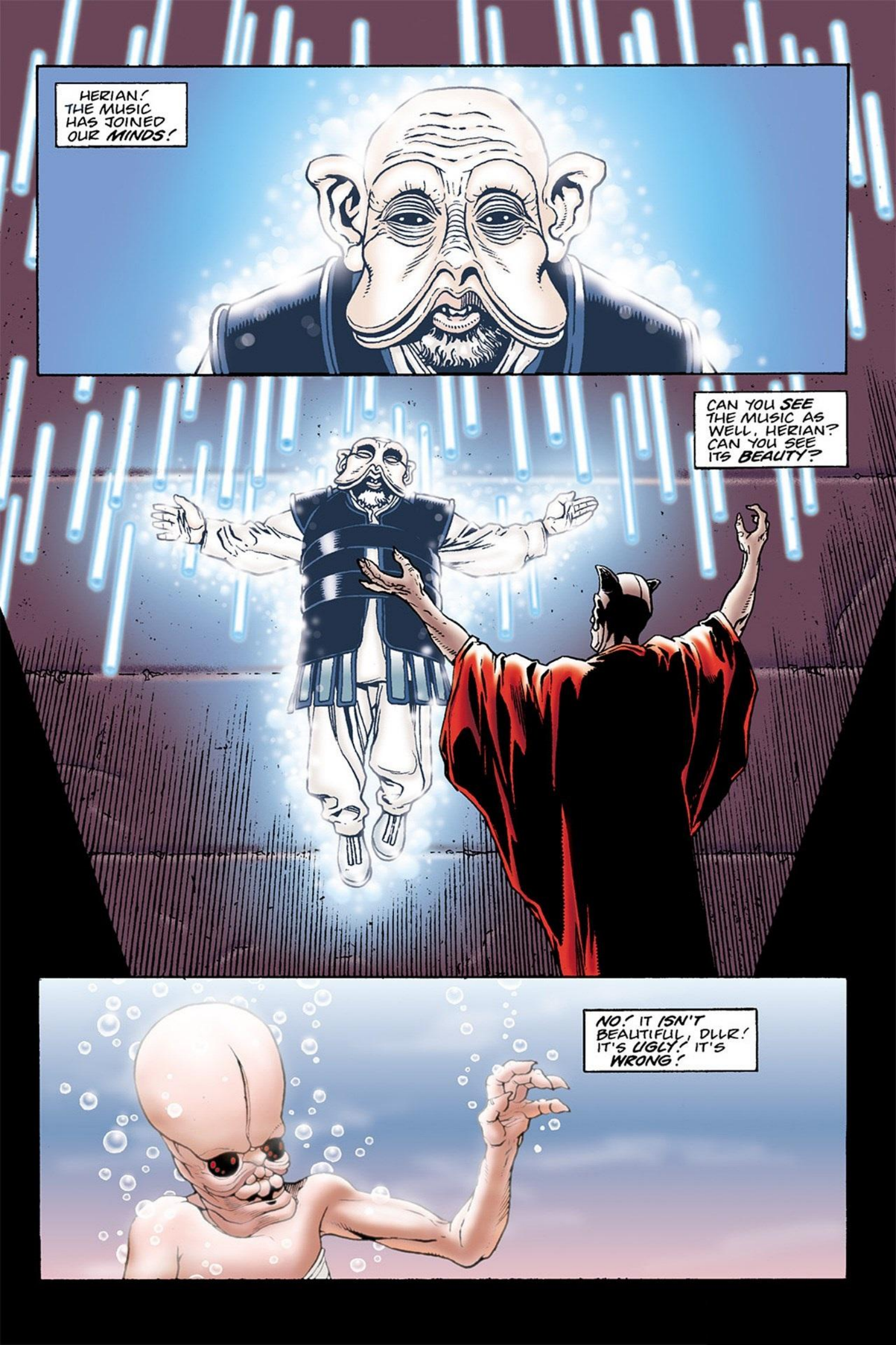
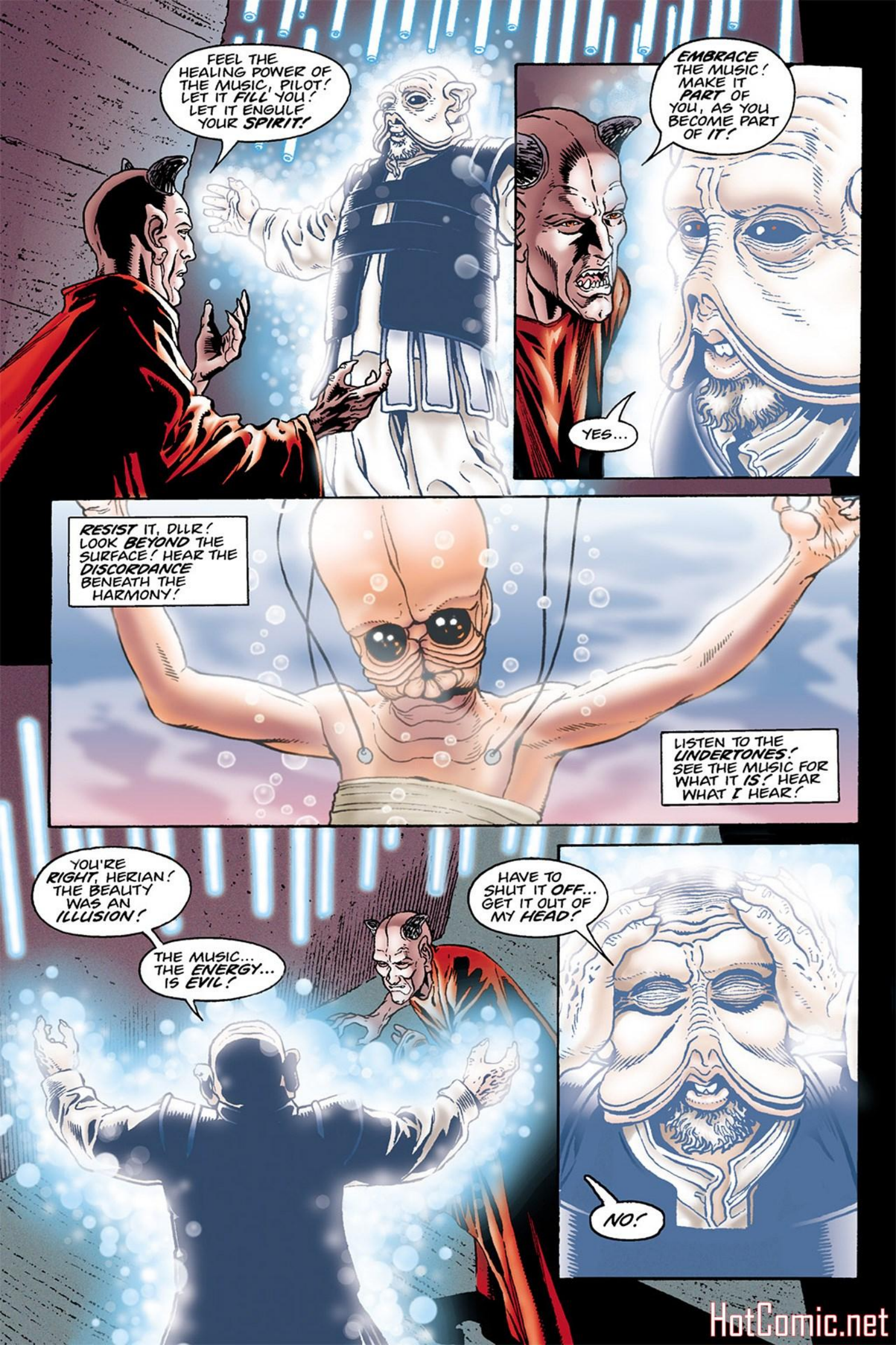

HERIAN! THE MUSIC HAS JOINED OUR MINDS!
CAN YOU SEE THE MUSIC AS WELL, HERIAN? CAN YOU SEE ITS BEAUTY?
NO! IT ISN'T BEAUTIFUL, DLLR! IT'S UGLY! IT'S WRONG!



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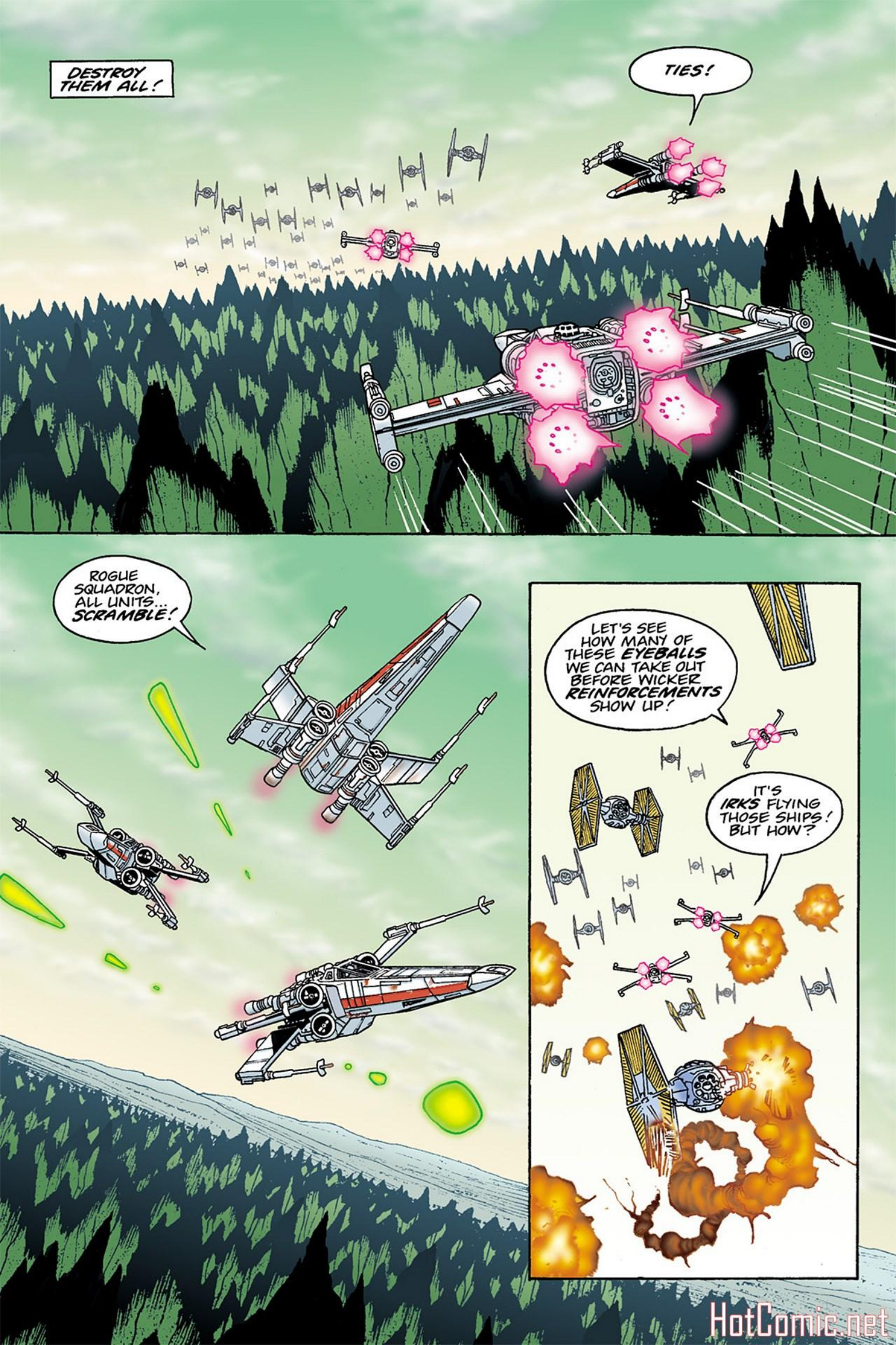
HE REJECTS THE POWER! HE IS USELESS TO ME!
KILL HIM, MY PETS!
NONE OF THE INTRUDERS ARE WORTHY TO JOIN US! THEY'RE ALL AFRAID AND WEAK!
DESTROY THEM!



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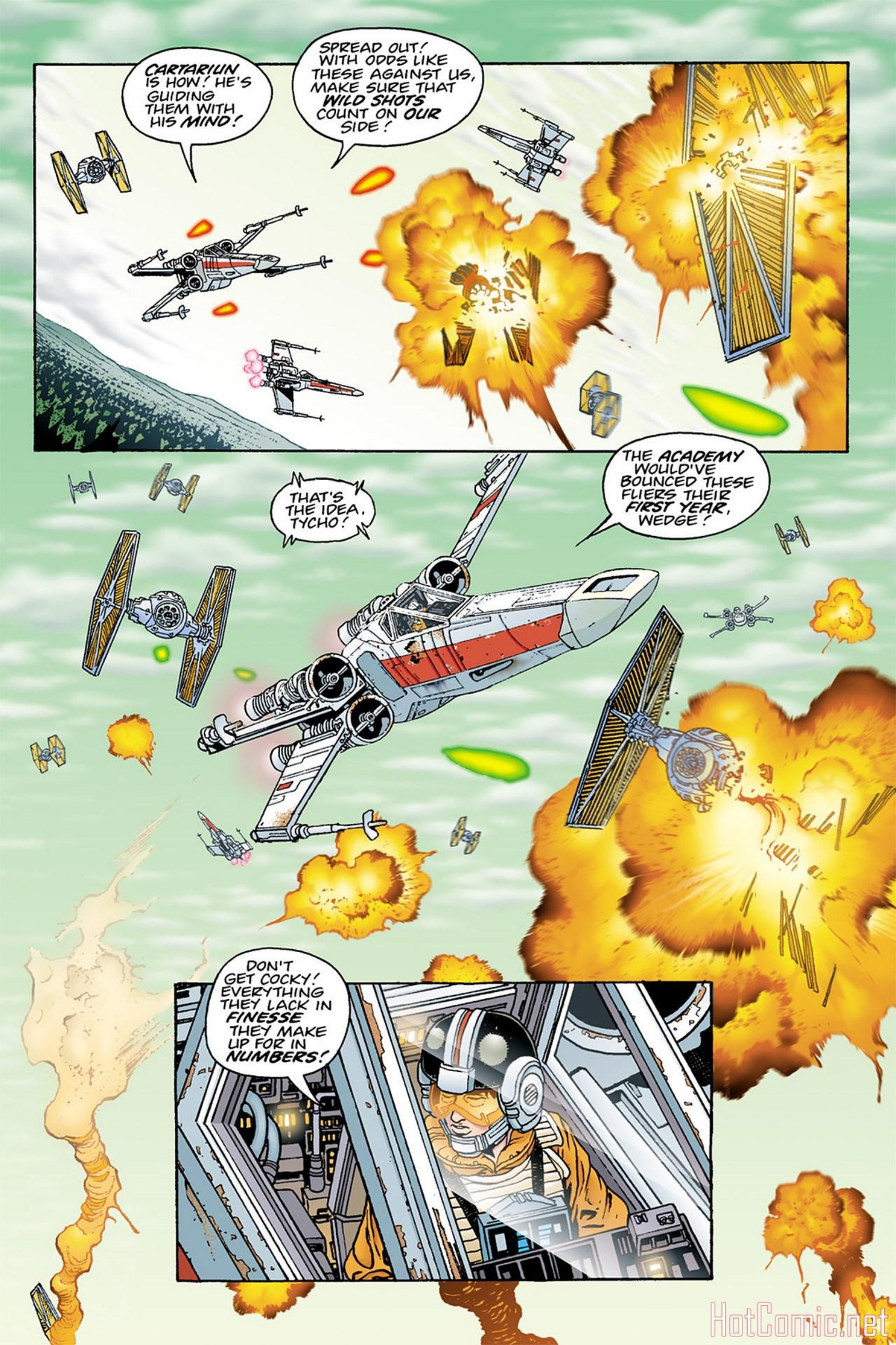

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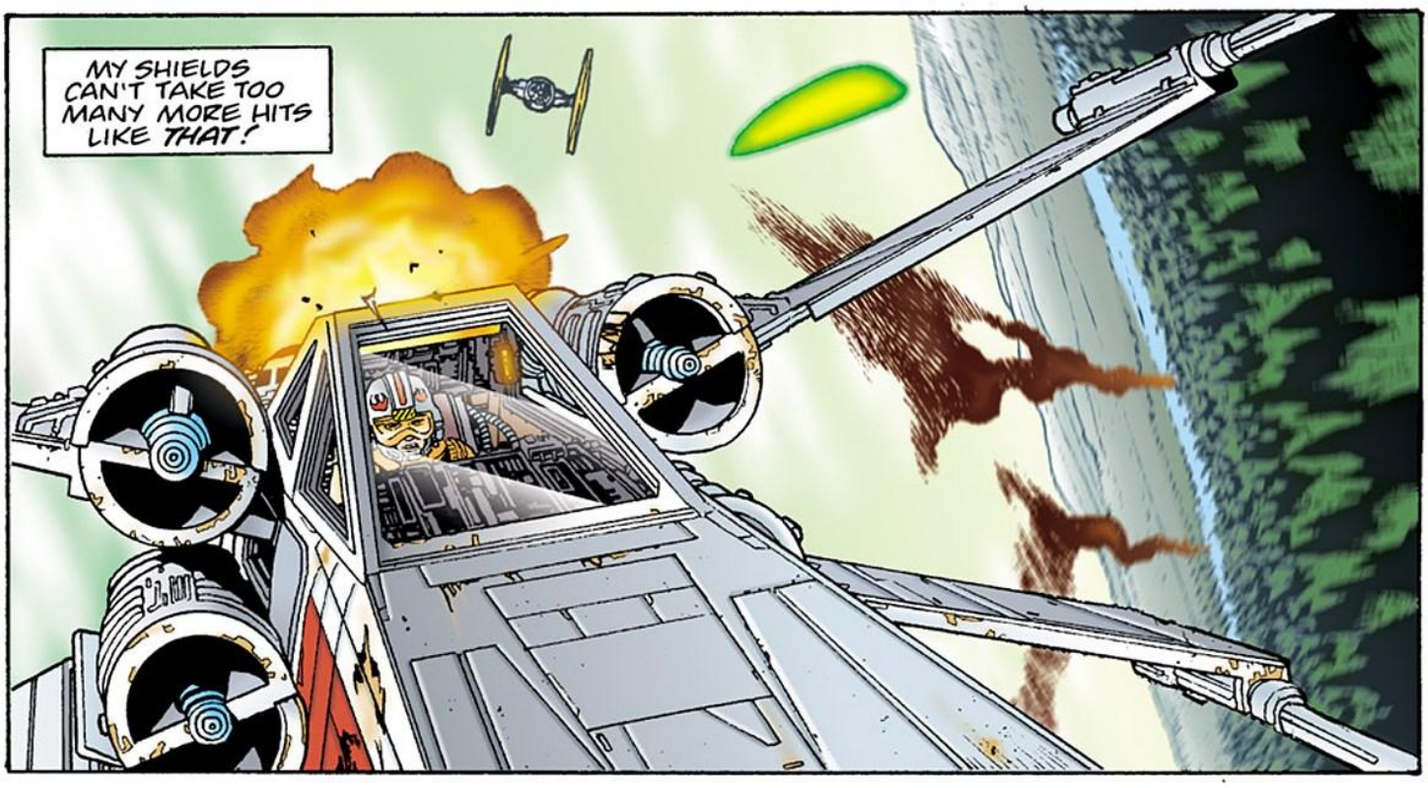

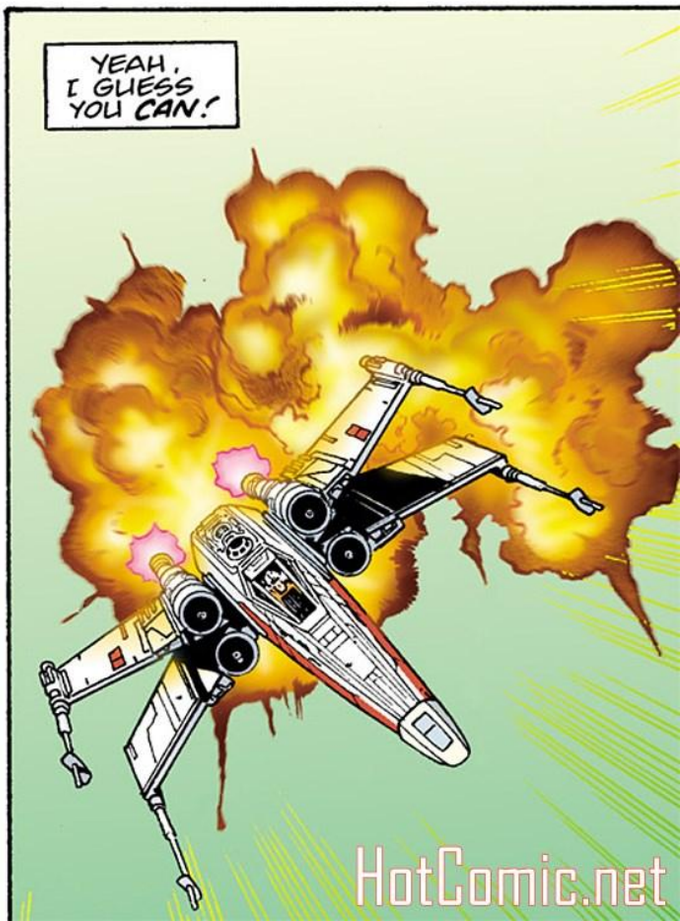

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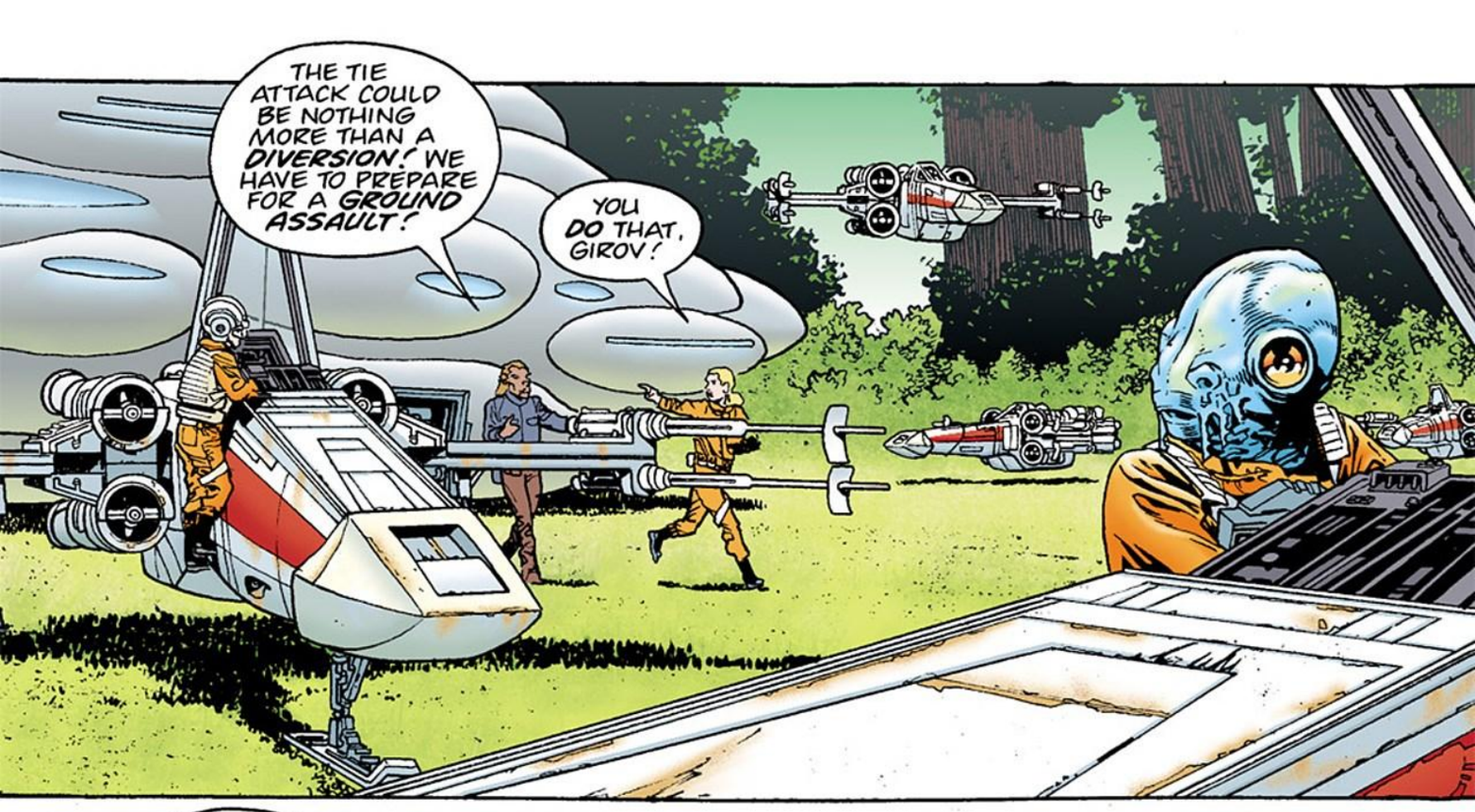

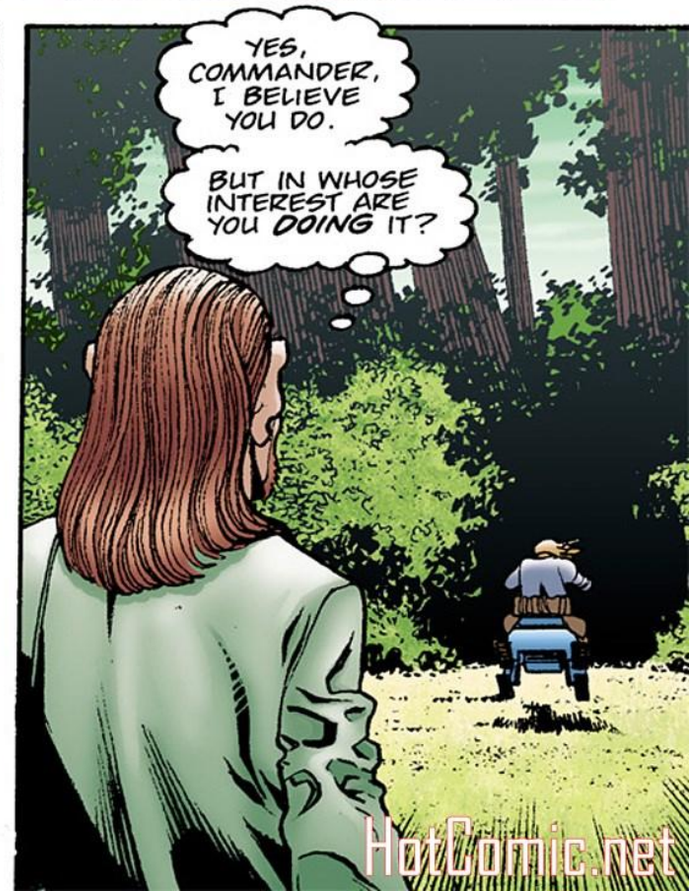

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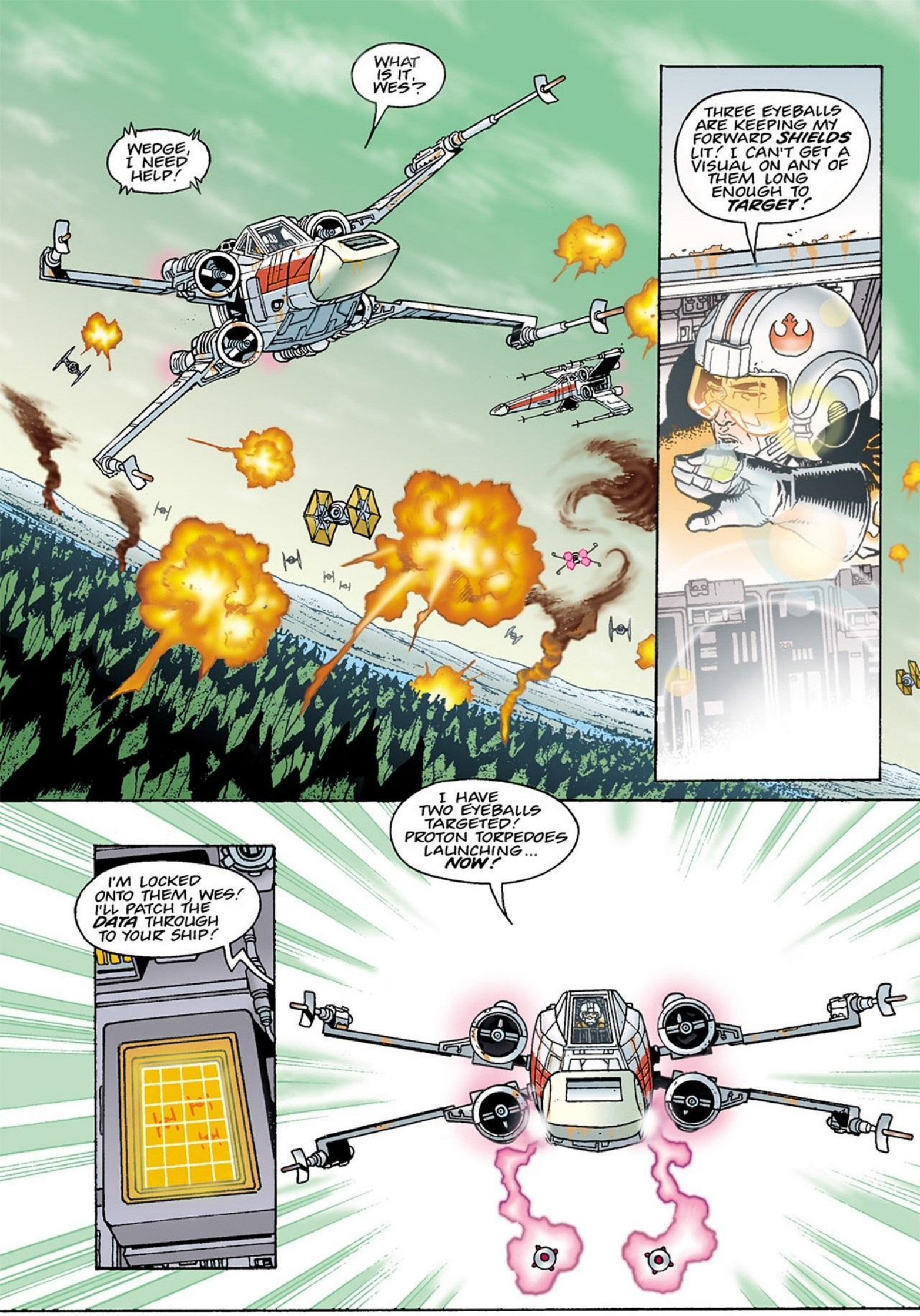
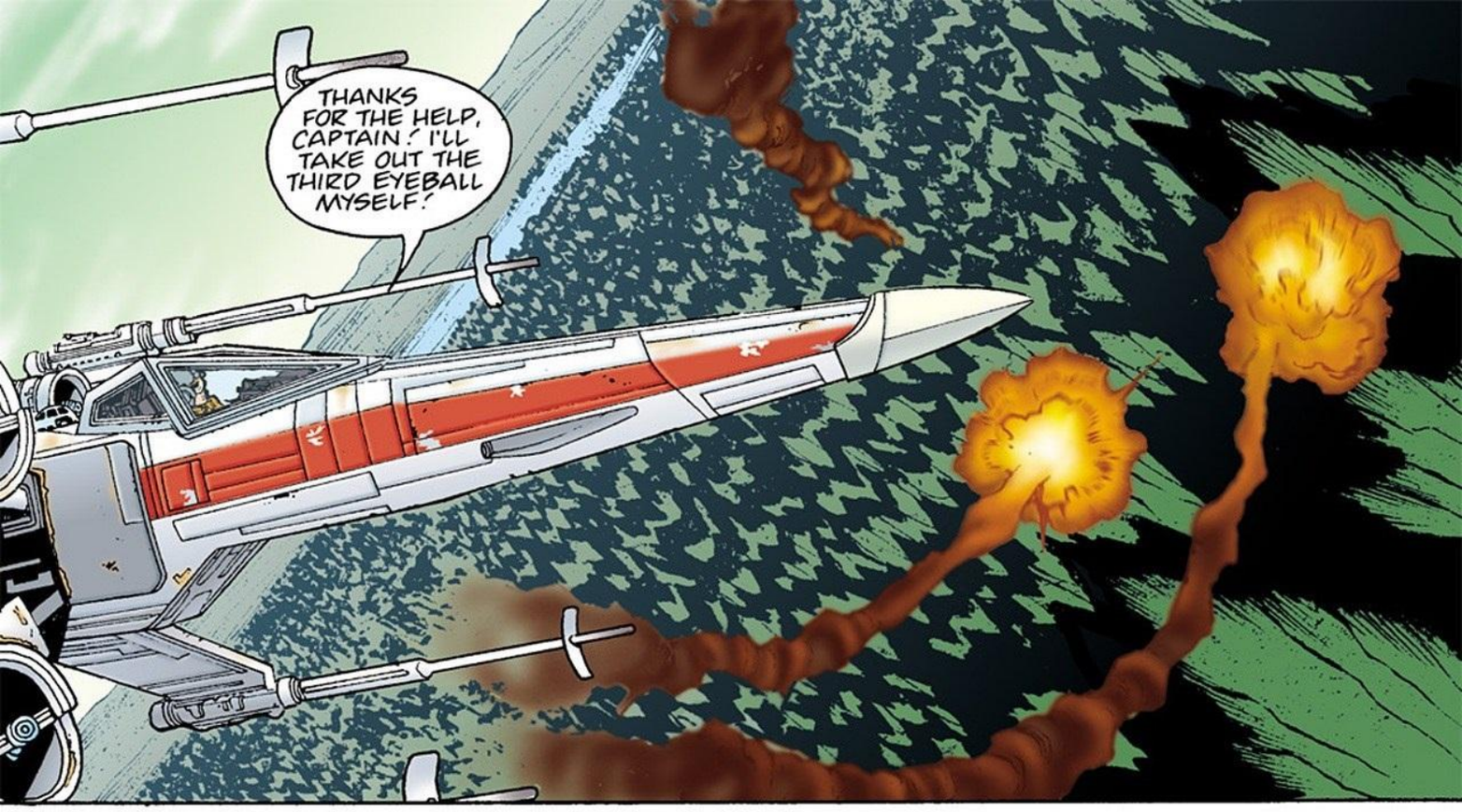
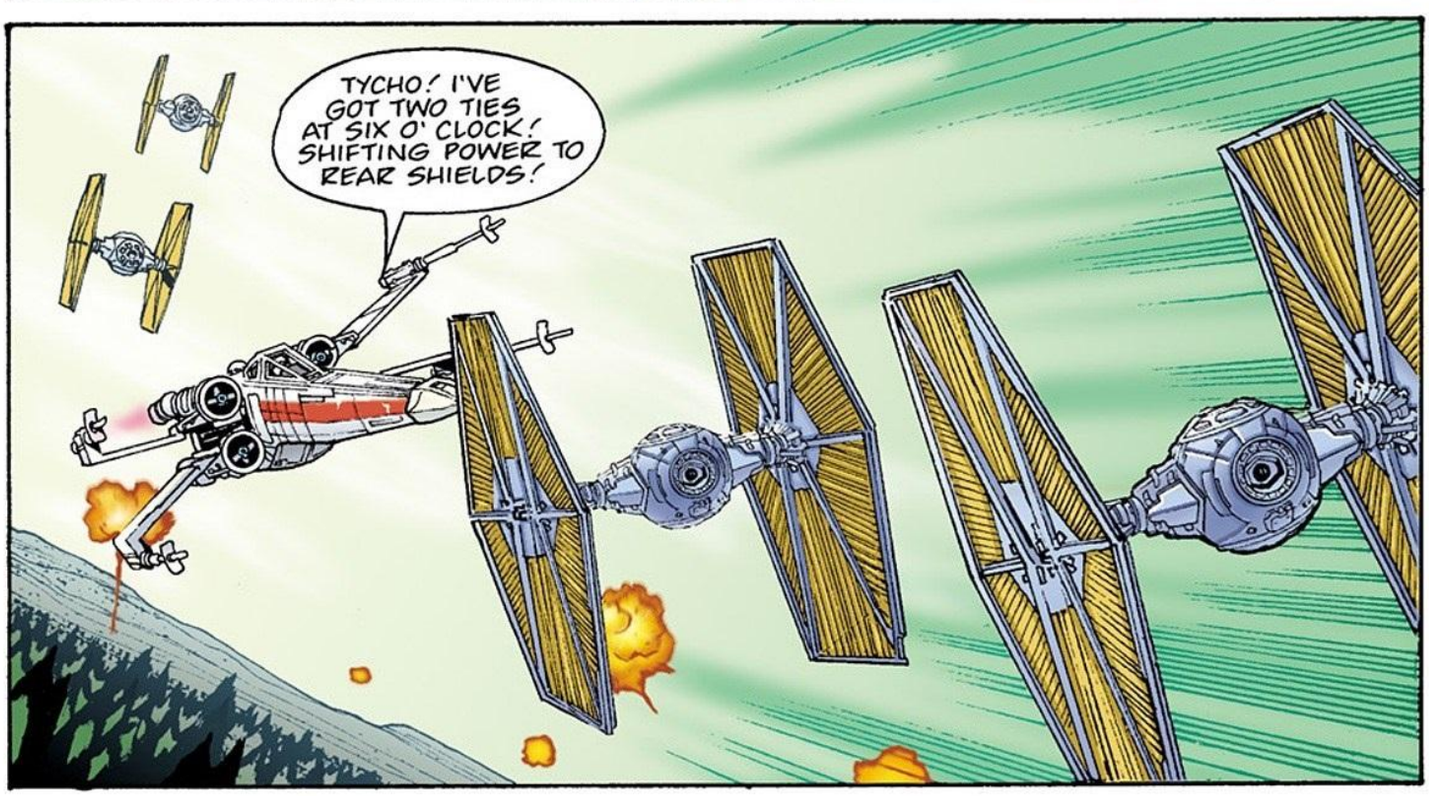
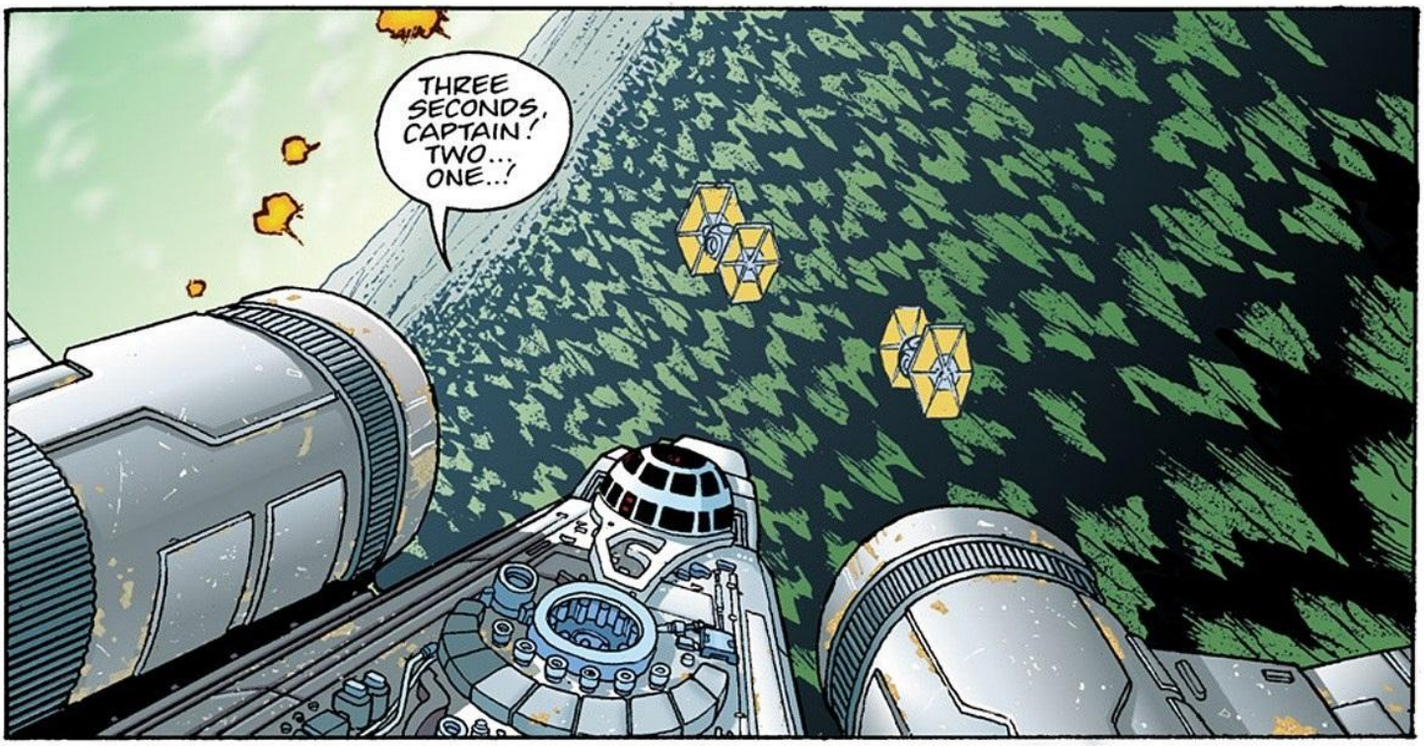
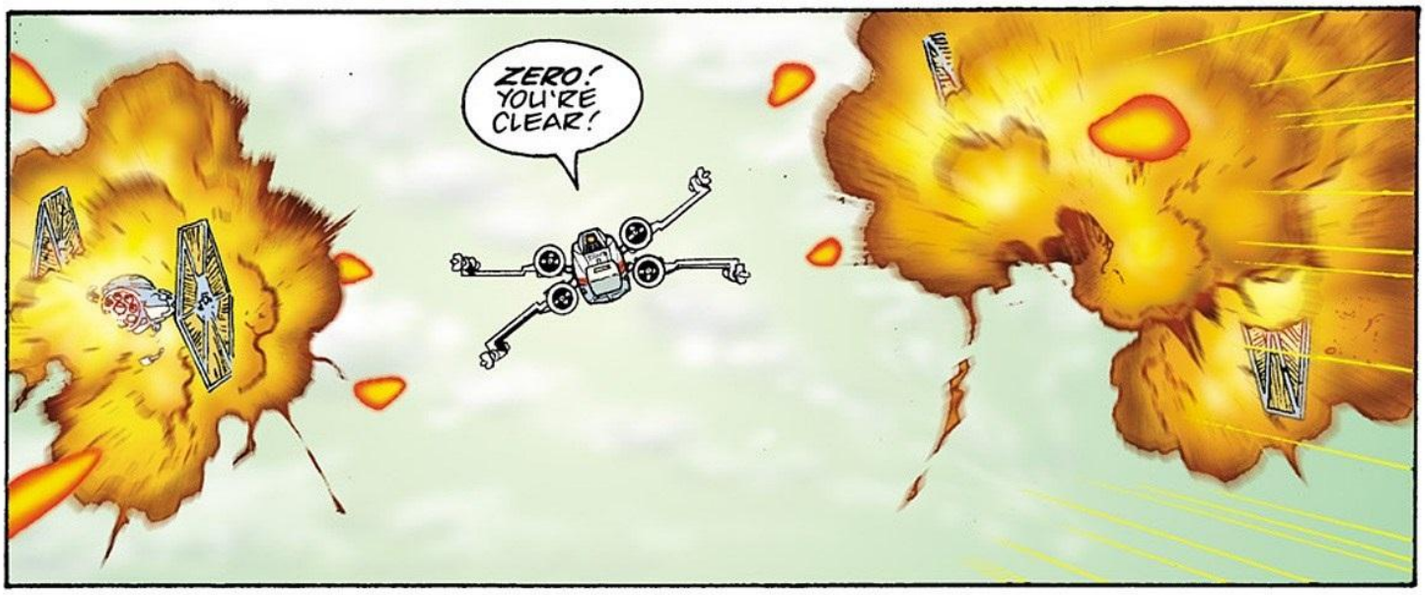

WEDGE, I NEED HELP!
WHAT IS IT, WES?
THREE EYEBALLS ARE KEEPING MY FORWARD SHIELDS LIT! I CAN'T GET A VISUAL ON ANY OF THEM LONG ENOUGH TO TARGET!
I'M LOCKED ONTO THEM, WES! I'LL PATCH THE DATA THROUGH TO YOUR SHIP!
I HAVE TWO EYEBALLS TARGETED! PROTON TORPEDOES LAUNCHING... NOW!

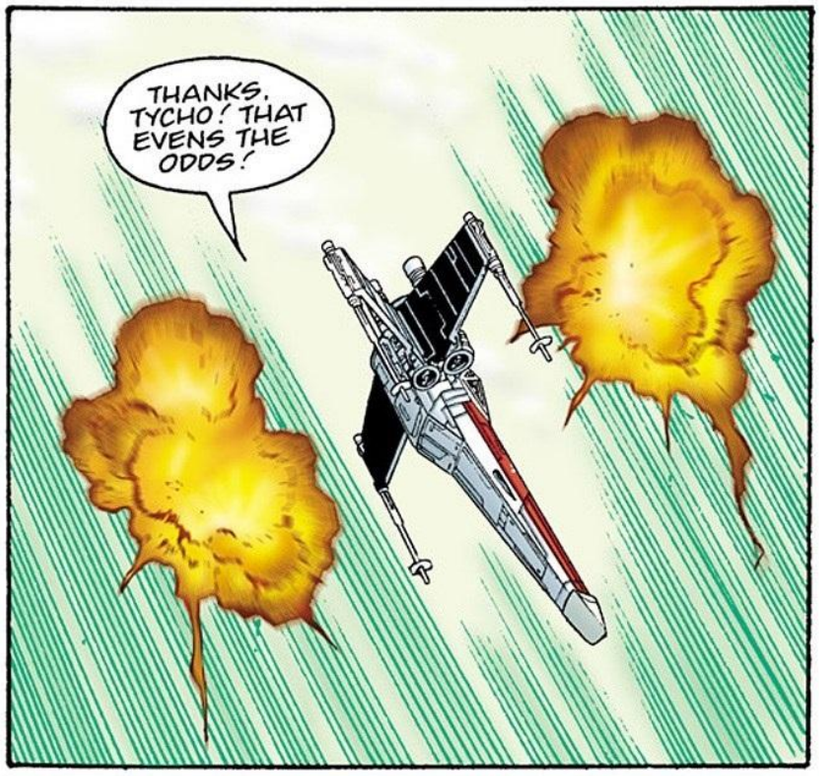

THANKS FOR THE HELP, CAPTAIN! I'LL TAKE OUT THE THIRD EYEBALL MYSELF!

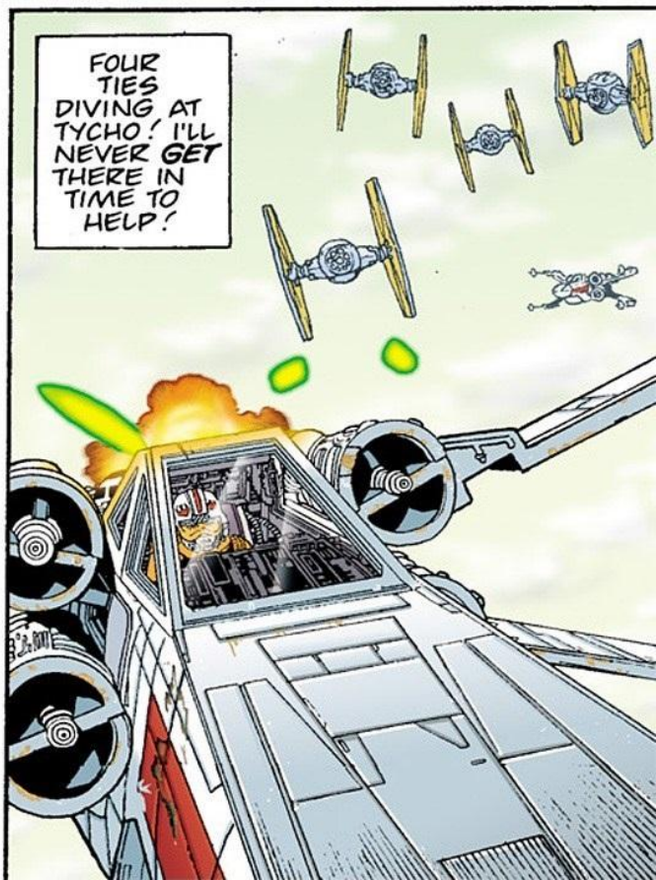
THIS'LL TEACH YOU TO GANG UP ON A ROGUE!

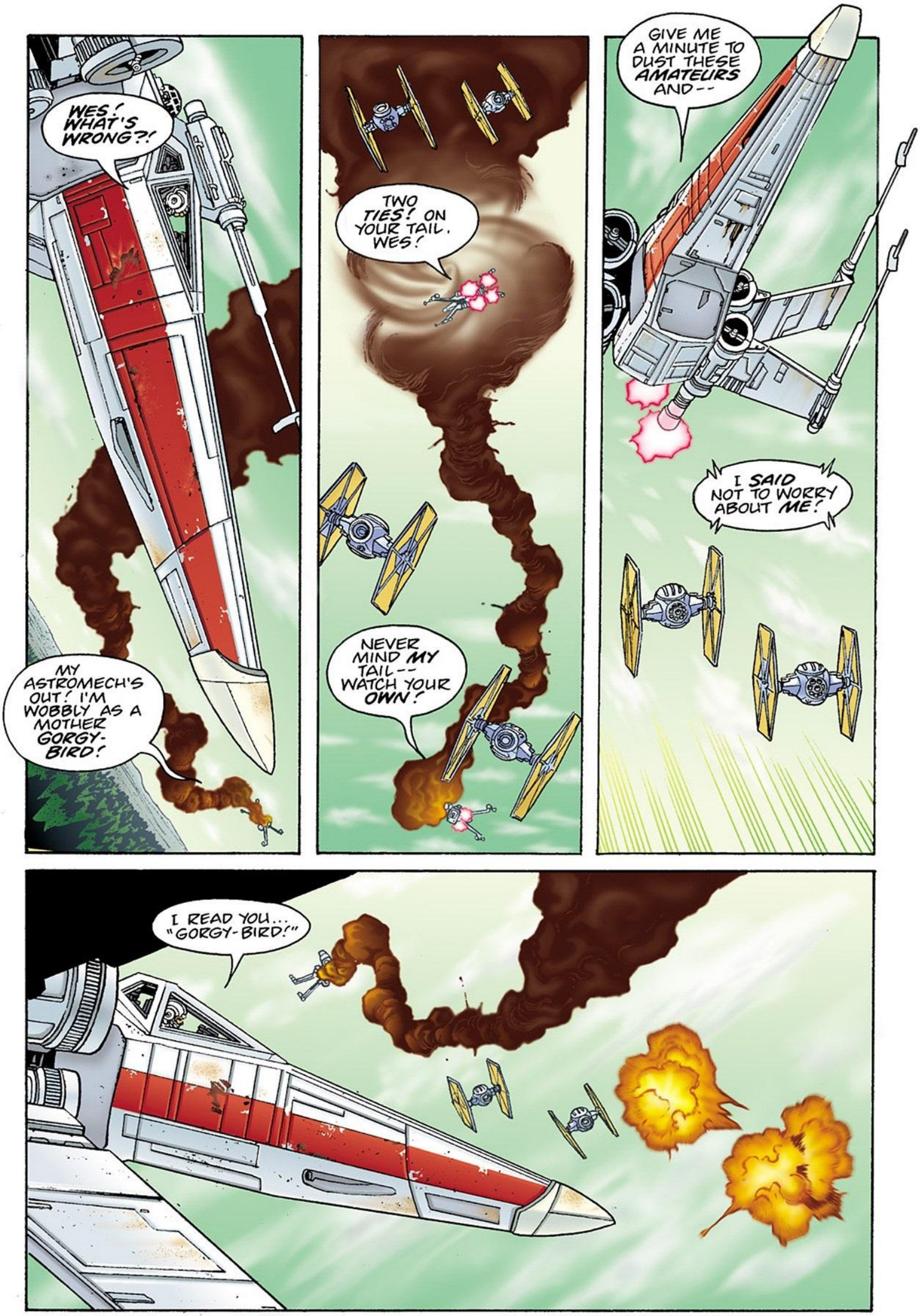

TYCHO! I'VE GOT TWO TIES AT SIX O' CLOCK! SHIFTING POWER TO REAR SHIELDS!


THREE SECONDS, CAPTAIN! TWO... ONE...!


ZERO! YOU'RE CLEAR!


THANKS, TYCHO! THAT EVENS THE ODDS!


FOUR TIES DIVING AT TYCHO! I'LL NEVER GET THERE IN TIME TO HELP!


WES! WHAT'S WRONG?!
MY ASTROMECH'S OUT! I'M WOBBLY AS A MOTHER GORGY-BIRD!
TWO TIES! ON YOUR TAIL, WES!
NEVER MIND MY TAIL-- WATCH YOUR OWN!
GIVE ME A MINUTE TO DUST THESE AMATEURS AND--
I SAID NOT TO WORRY ABOUT ME!
I READ YOU... "GORGY-BIRD!"

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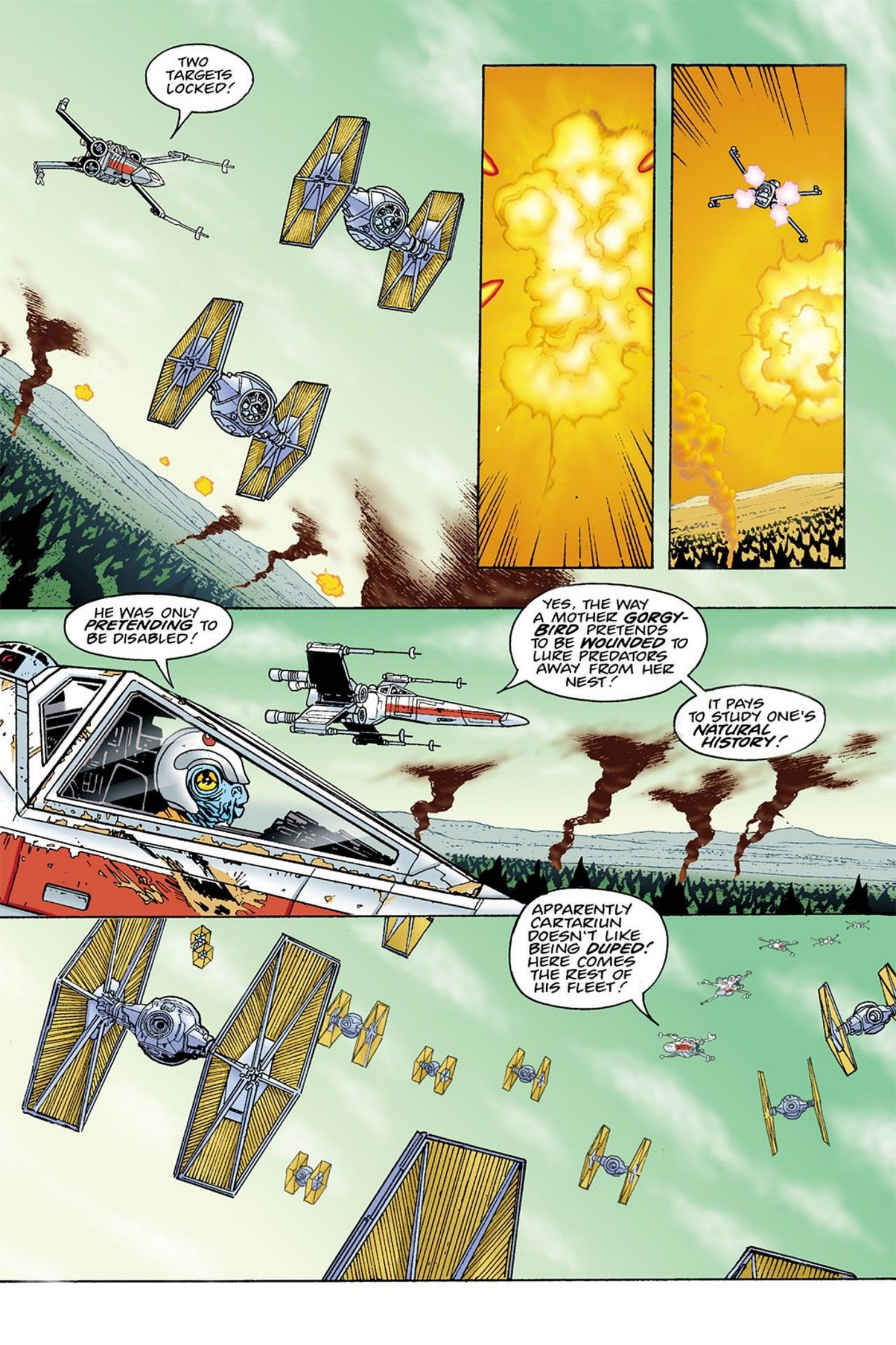
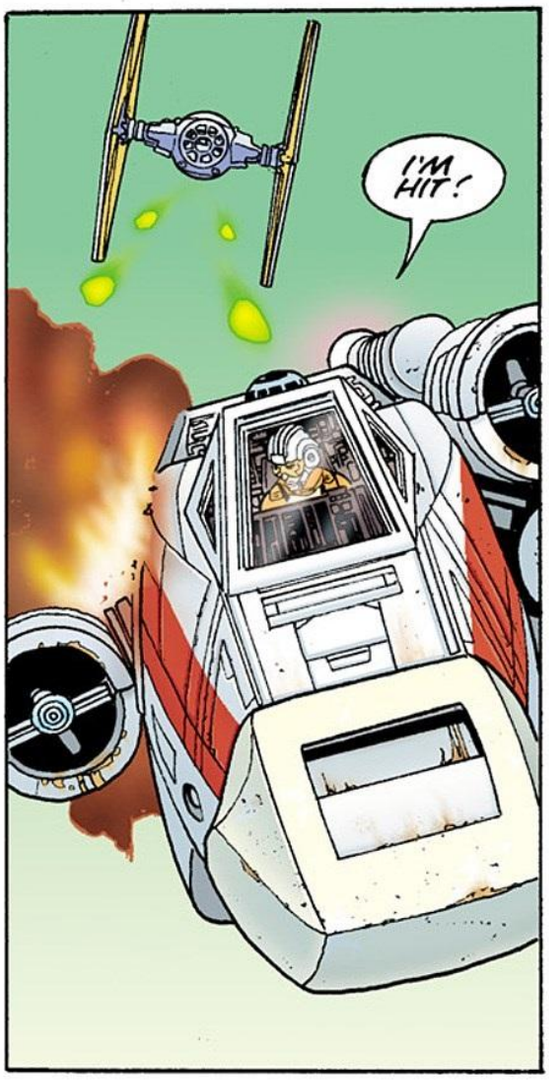
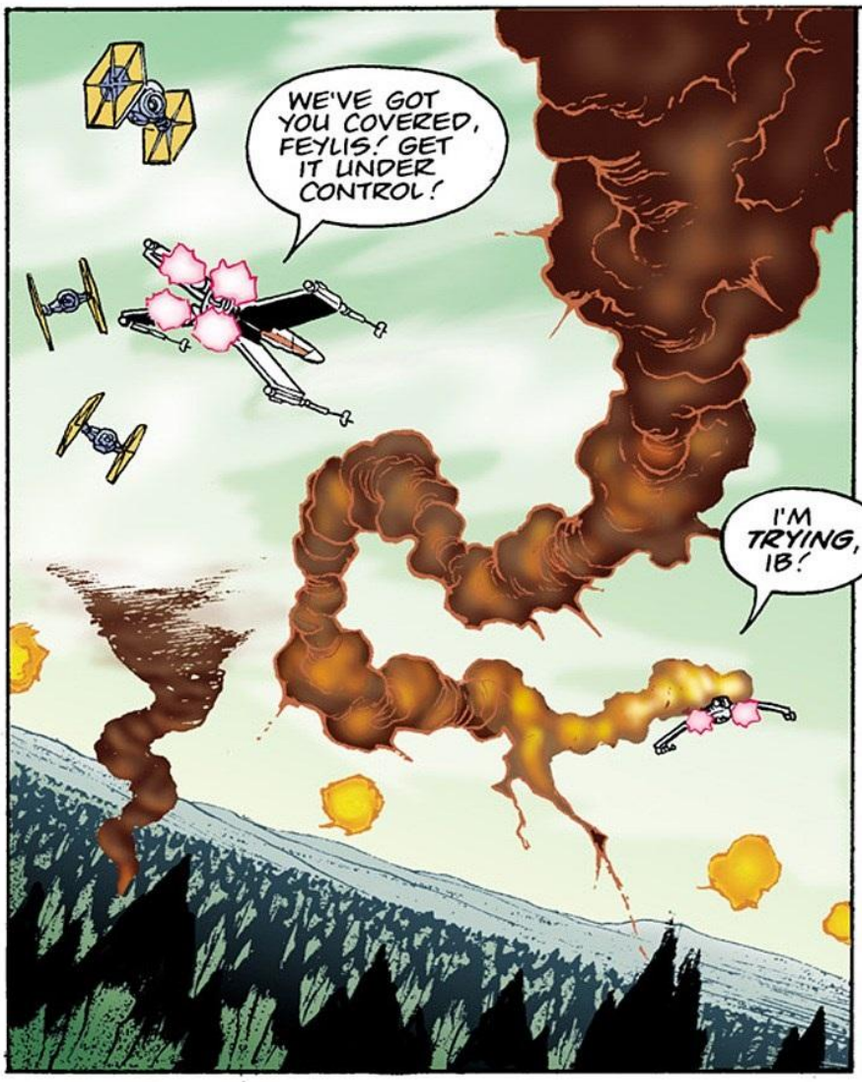
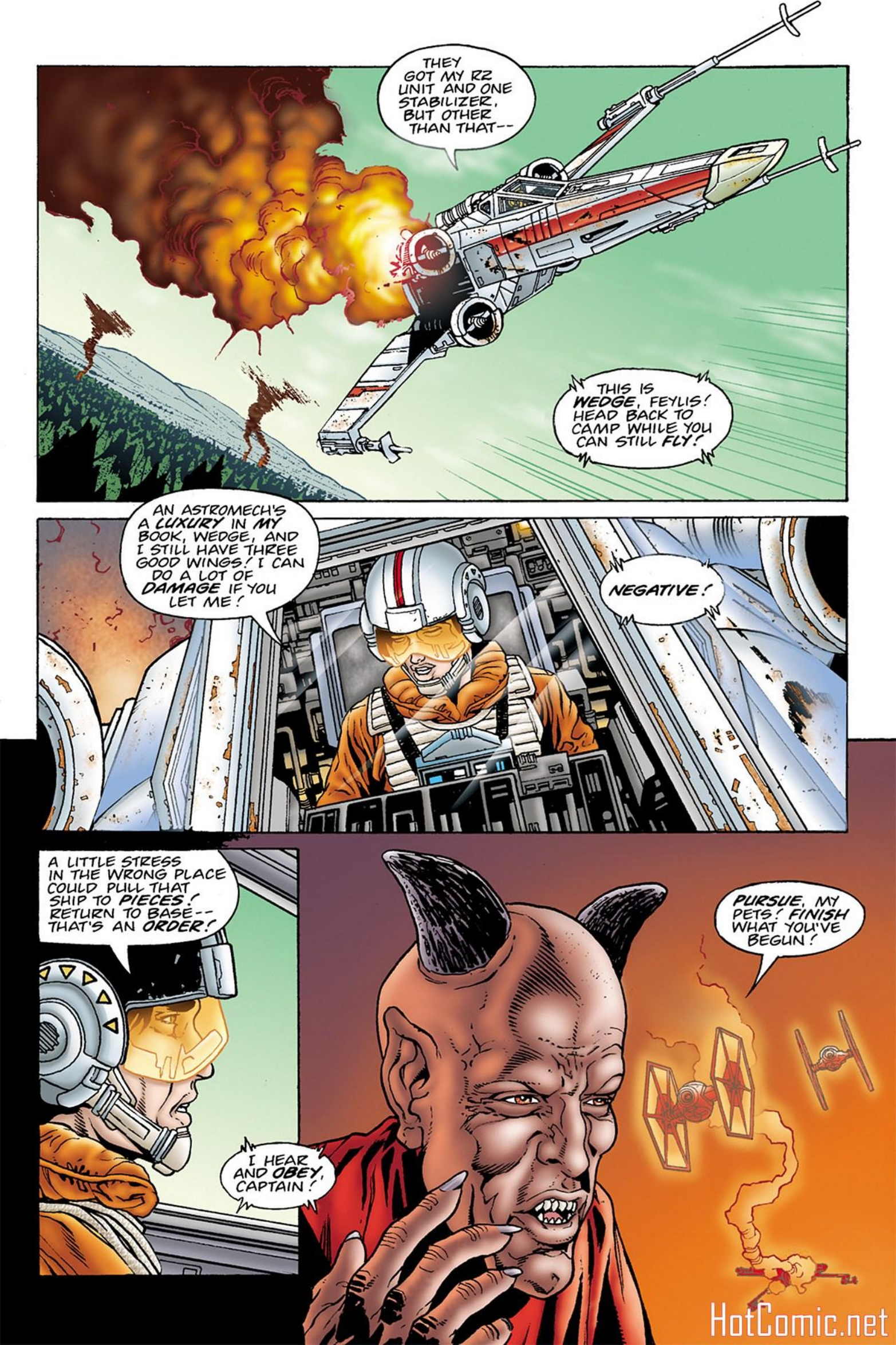

TWO TARGETS LOCKED!
HE WAS ONLY PRETENDING TO BE DISABLED!
YES, THE WAY A MOTHER GORGY-BIRD PRETENDS TO BE WOUNDED TO LURE PREDATORS AWAY FROM HER NEST!
IT PAYS TO STUDY ONE'S NATURAL HISTORY!
APPARENTLY CARTARIUN DOESN'T LIKE BEING DUPED! HERE COMES THE REST OF HIS FLEET!

IT'S LIKE SWATTING AT HORNETS! SO MANY OF THEM...!


I'M HIT!


WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED, FEYLIS! GET IT UNDER CONTROL!
I'M TRYING, IB!



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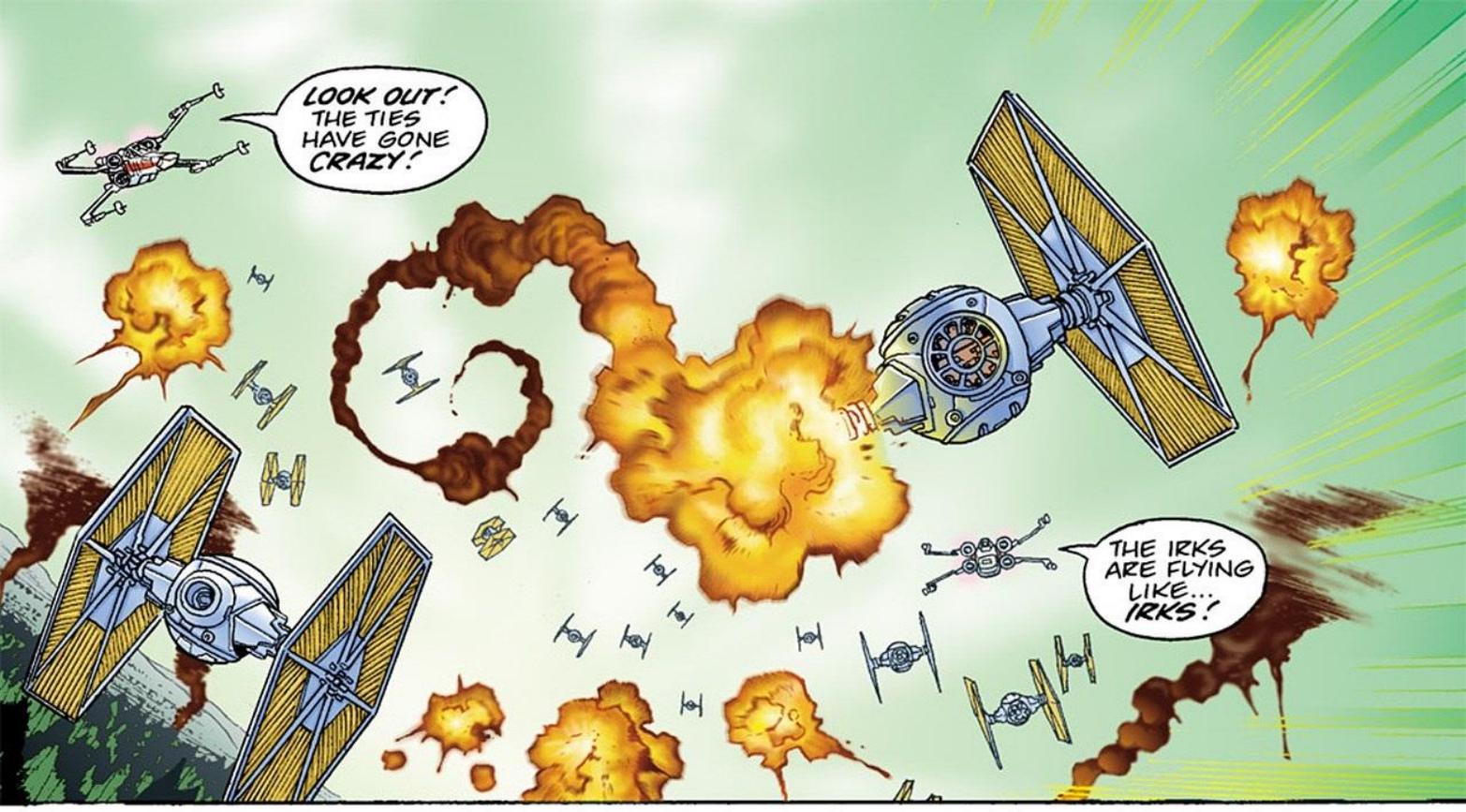
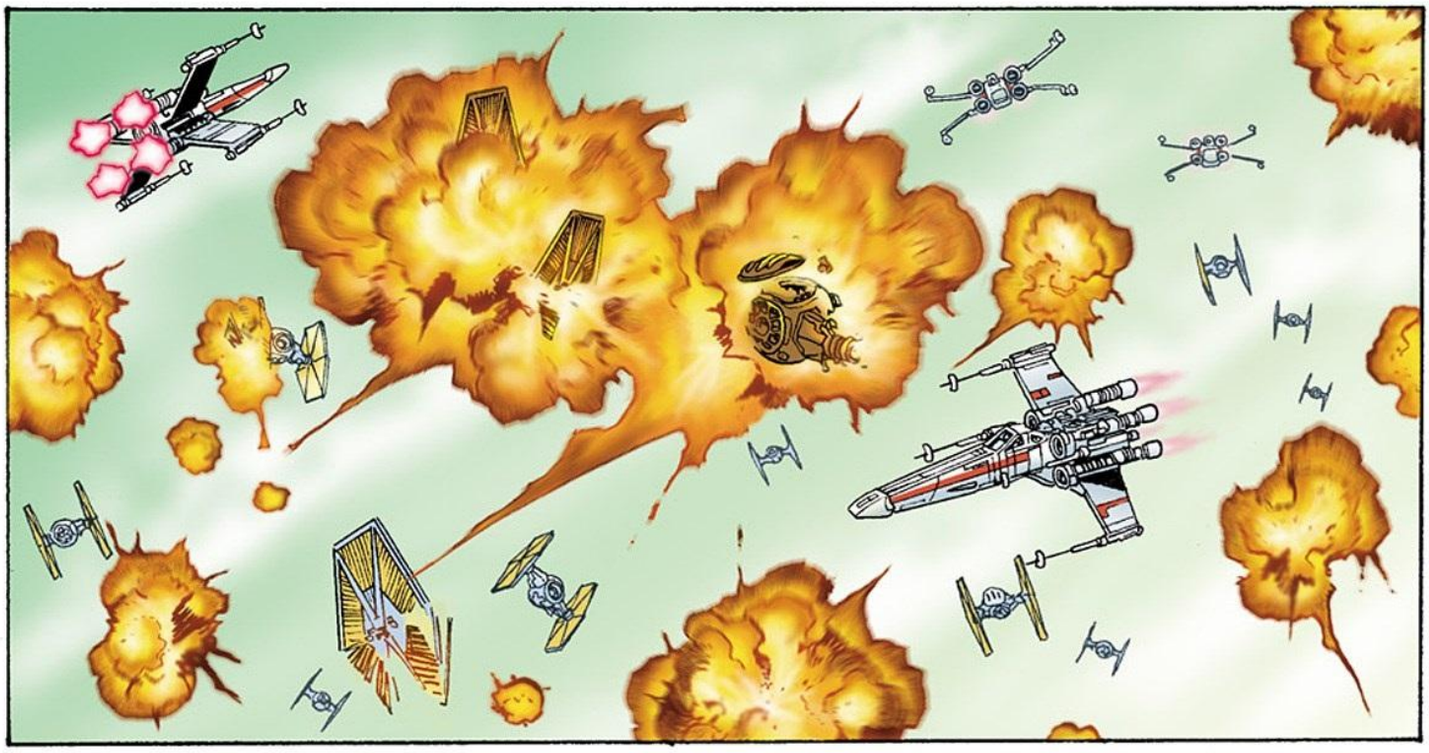
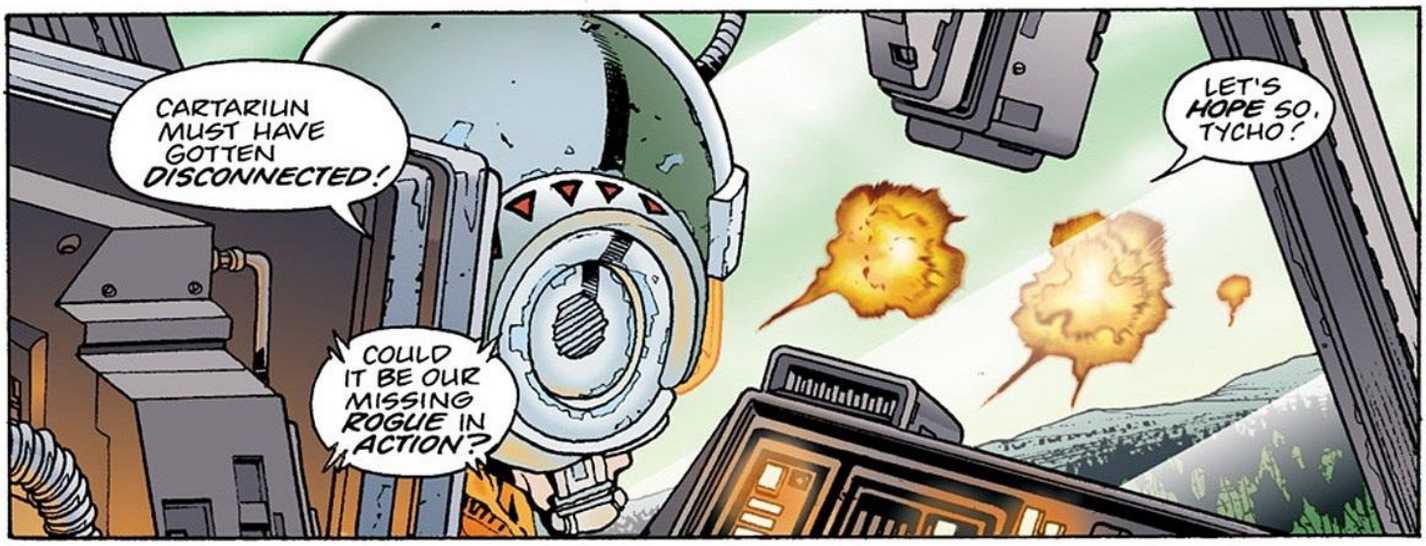
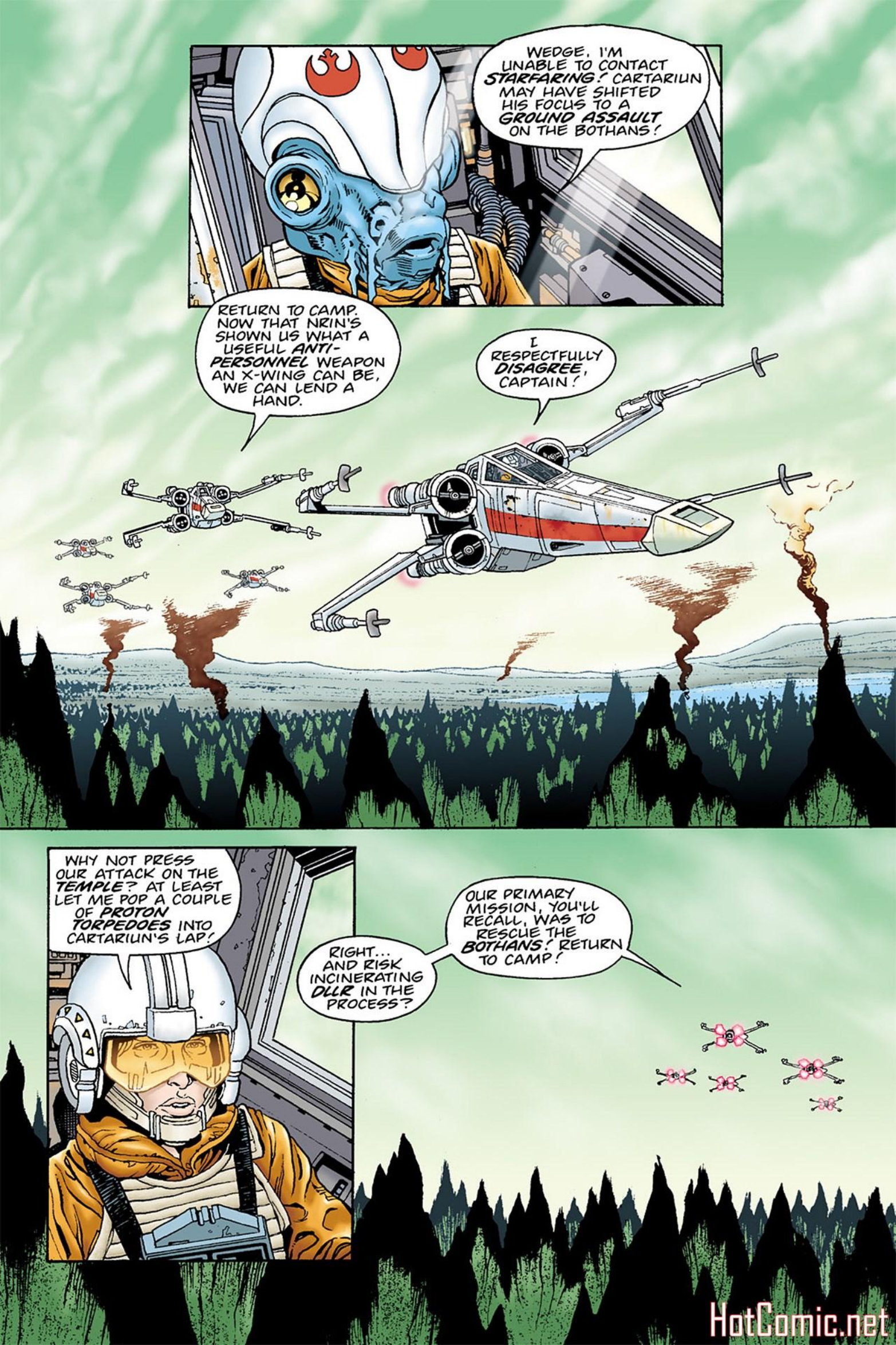

LOOK OUT! THE TIES HAVE GONE CRAZY!
THE IRKS ARE FLYING LIKE... IRKS!




CARTARIUN MUST HAVE GOTTEN DISCONNECTED!
COULD IT BE OUR MISSING ROGUE IN ACTION?
LET'S HOPE SO, TYCHO!



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YOU WERE RIGHT, CARTARIUN! THE POWER OF THIS PLACE IS INTOXICATING!
I COULD GROW QUITE ACCUSTOMED TO IT!
UGGHN!
I SEEM TO HAVE ARRIVED JUST IN TIME.

YOUR PATHETIC ATTACK ON ROGUE SQUADRON HAS FAILED. YOU HAVE THE POWER, BUT YOU LACK THE TRAINING TO USE IT EFFECTIVELY.

I, HOWEVER, AM ADEPT IN THE MEDITATIVE TECHNIQUE OF JESWANDI. IT IS AN ANCIENT ART AMONG BOTHANS.
ITS PRACTICE HAS TURNED THE TIDE OF MANY A BATTLE, AS IT SHALL DO HERE!
JESWANDI SHOWED ME THE POWER OF THIS PLACE. ALREADY I AM A GREATER MASTER THAN YOU!
THIS TEMPLE SHALL INDEED BE THE NUCLEUS OF A NEW EMPIRE! BUT IT WILL BE I, GIROV DZA'TEY, AT ITS HEAD... NOT SOME LOWLY DEVARONIAN TECH!

THEN LET ME (GASP) SERVE YOU, MY MASTER!
UNFORTUNATELY, YOU'VE TASTED THE POWER OF COMMAND. IN TIME, A SUBORDINATE POSITION WOULD BEGIN TO RANKLE, AND YOU WOULD BETRAY ME.
I WOULD HAVE TO WATCH MY BACK CONSTANTLY... MY SLEEP WOULD BE UNEASY! NO, I'M AFRAID THE SITUATION WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? MY HEAD... SUCH PRESSURE!
PITY. I WAS ONLY ENLARGING YOUR HEAD TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR EGO!
AS FOR YOU, ROGUE, I GIVE YOU JUST ENOUGH SITH ENERGY TO KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE, SO THAT YOU MAY WITNESS THE DEATH OF ROGUE SQUADRON!
DON'T... DO ME ANY FAVORS.

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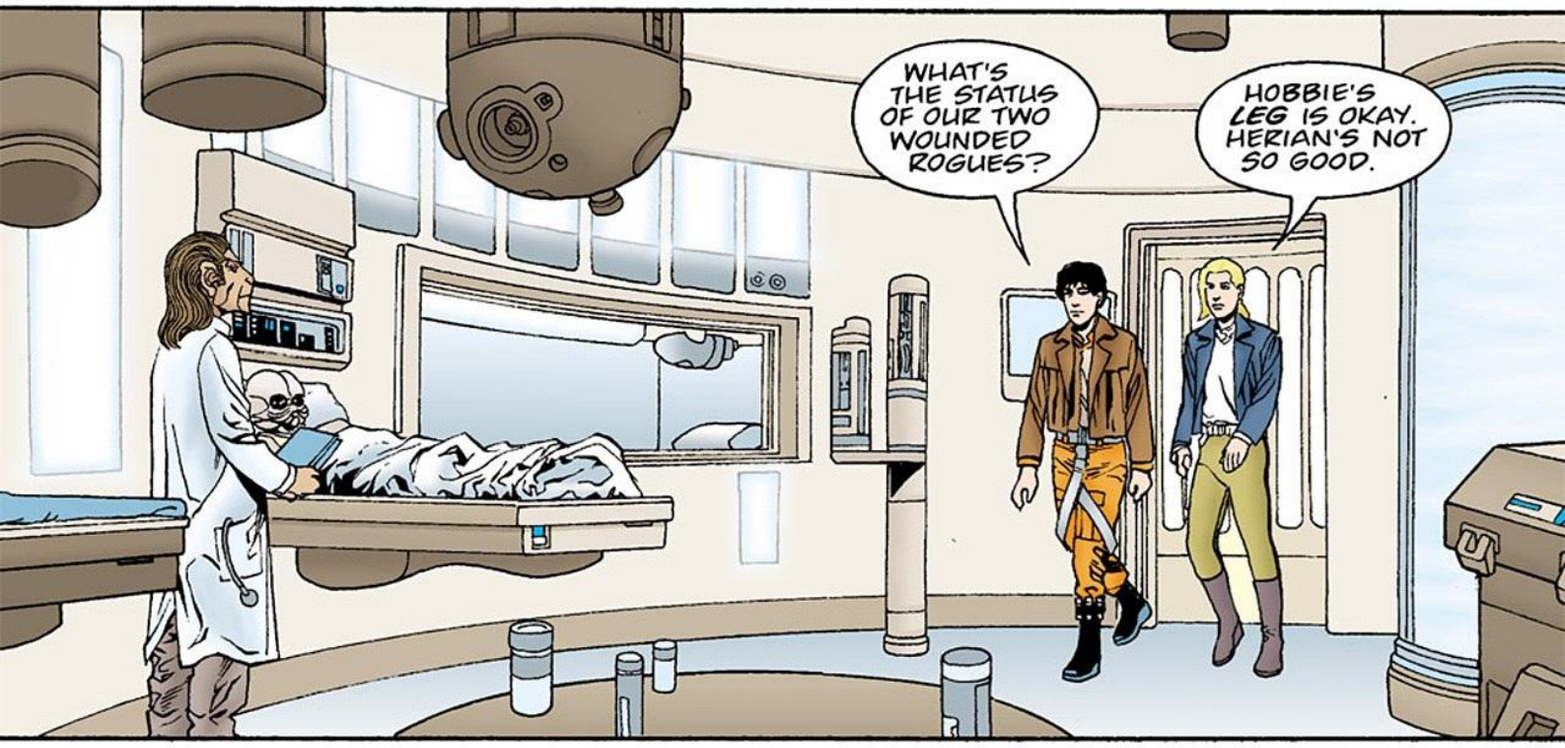
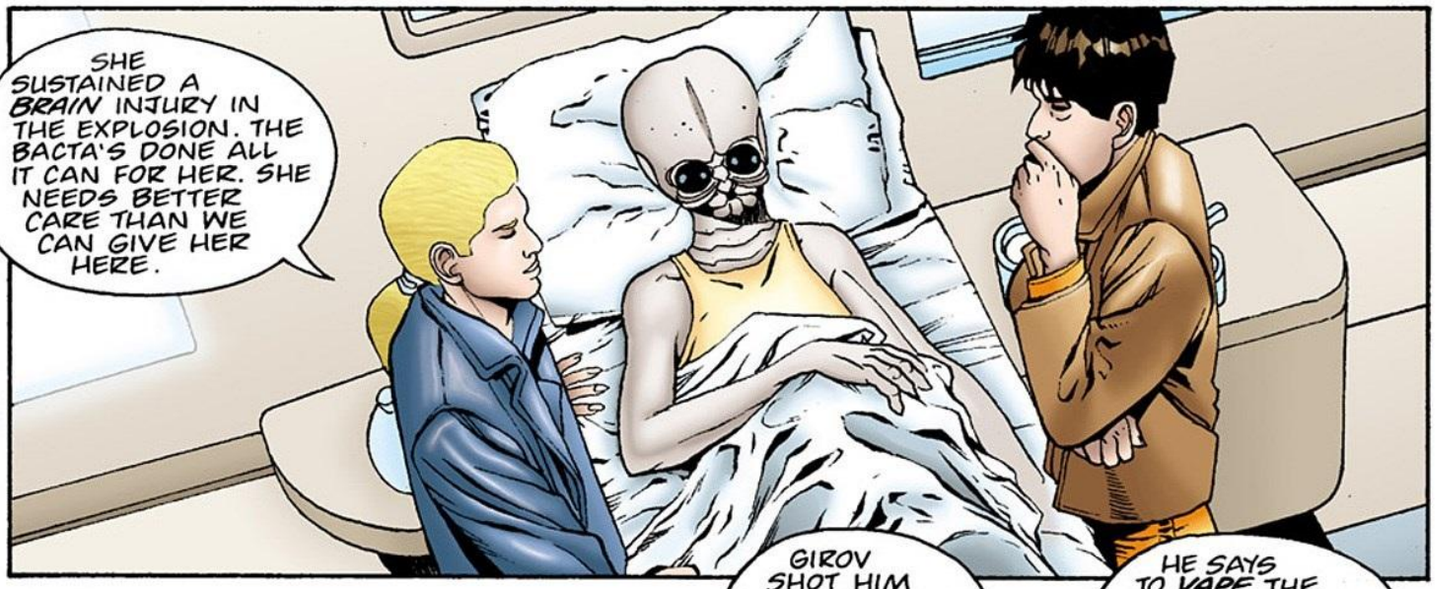

WHAT'S THE STATUS OF OUR TWO WOUNDED ROGUES?
HOBBIE'S LEG IS OKAY. HERIAN'S NOT SO GOOD.

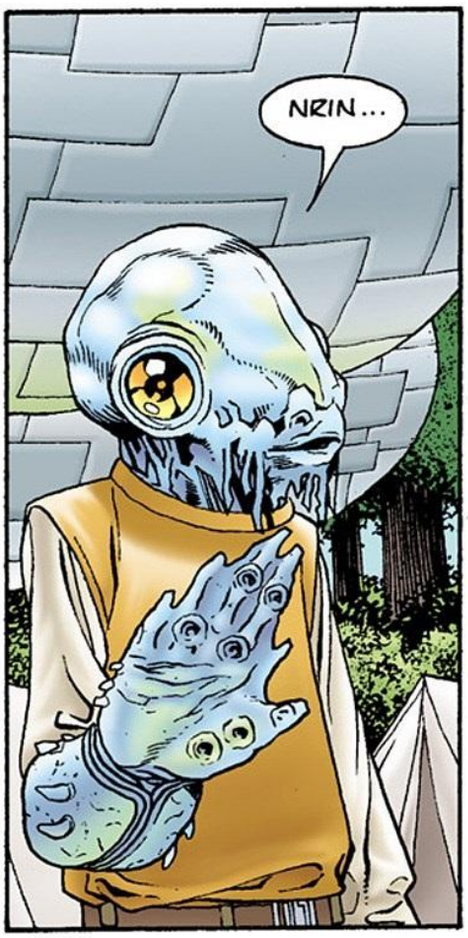

SHE SUSTAINED A BRAIN INJURY IN THE EXPLOSION. THE BACTA'S DONE ALL IT CAN FOR HER. SHE NEEDS BETTER CARE THAN WE CAN GIVE HER HERE.

CAPTAIN ANTILLES... I HAVE TO SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT OLLR!

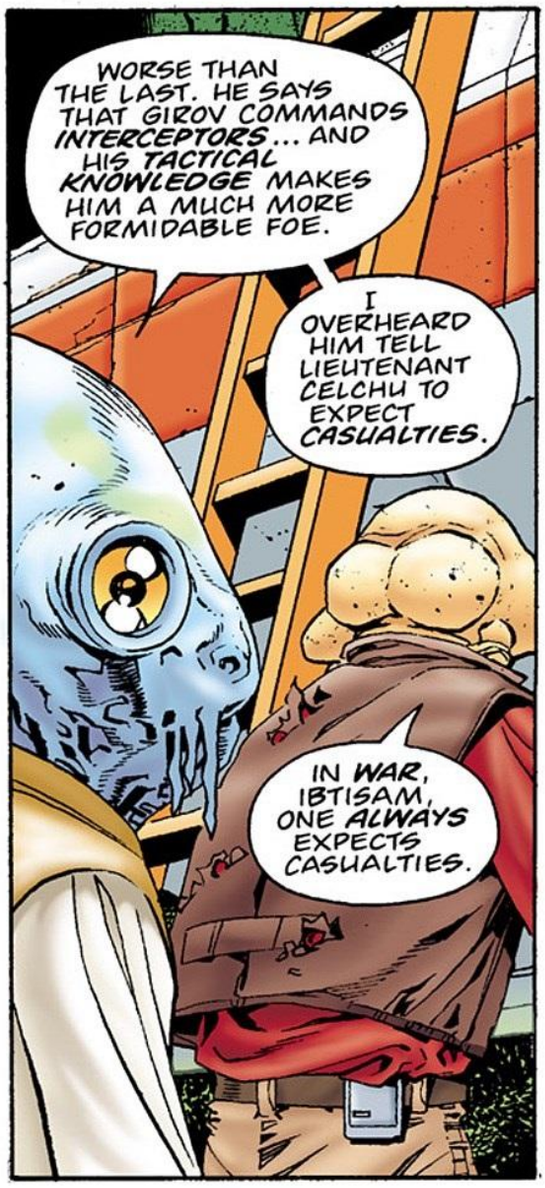
HE SUCCUMBED TO THE MUSIC OF THE TEMPLE. HE'S USING THE SITH MAGIC TO LINK OUR MINDS.
GIROV SHOT HIM FROM BEHIND, AND NOW HE'S DYING! HE...HE SENDS YOU A MESSAGE!

HE SAYS TO VAPE THE TEMPLE, CAPTAIN! REDUCING IT TO RUBBLE AND DUST IS THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THE EVIL!

SO THEY TOLD YOU ABOUT GIROV.
YES. NOW I NEED TO KNOW WHAT YOU PLAN TO DO ABOUT IT.
YOU'RE WONDERING WHERE MY LOYALTIES LIE. WILL I FOLLOW MY COMMANDER INTO THE DARKNESS? OR JOIN YOU IN SEEKING OUT AND EXTERMINATING HIM?
MY GUT TELLS ME THAT YOU'RE AS ANXIOUS AS WE ARE TO DESTROY THE POWER OF THIS PLACE. YOU'VE SEEN ITS CORRUPTING EFFECT ON YOUR PEOPLE... ON YOUR OWN COMMANDER. YOU KNOW IT FOR WHAT IT IS.
I DO INDEED, CAPTAIN ANTILLES. YOU MAY COUNT ON MY FORCES TO LEAD AN EFFECTIVE GROUND ASSAULT.
AND MAY I SAY... TO CONFRONT ME IN MY OWN QUARTERS, ALONE AND UNARMED, YOU MUST PLACE GREAT FAITH IN THIS "GUT" OF YOURS.
NO, NOT SO MUCH.


NRIN...

YES, IBTISAM?
CAPTAIN ANTILLES ANTICIPATES THAT THE ODDS WILL BE GREATLY AGAINST US IN THE COMING BATTLE.
AS THEY WERE IN THE LAST.

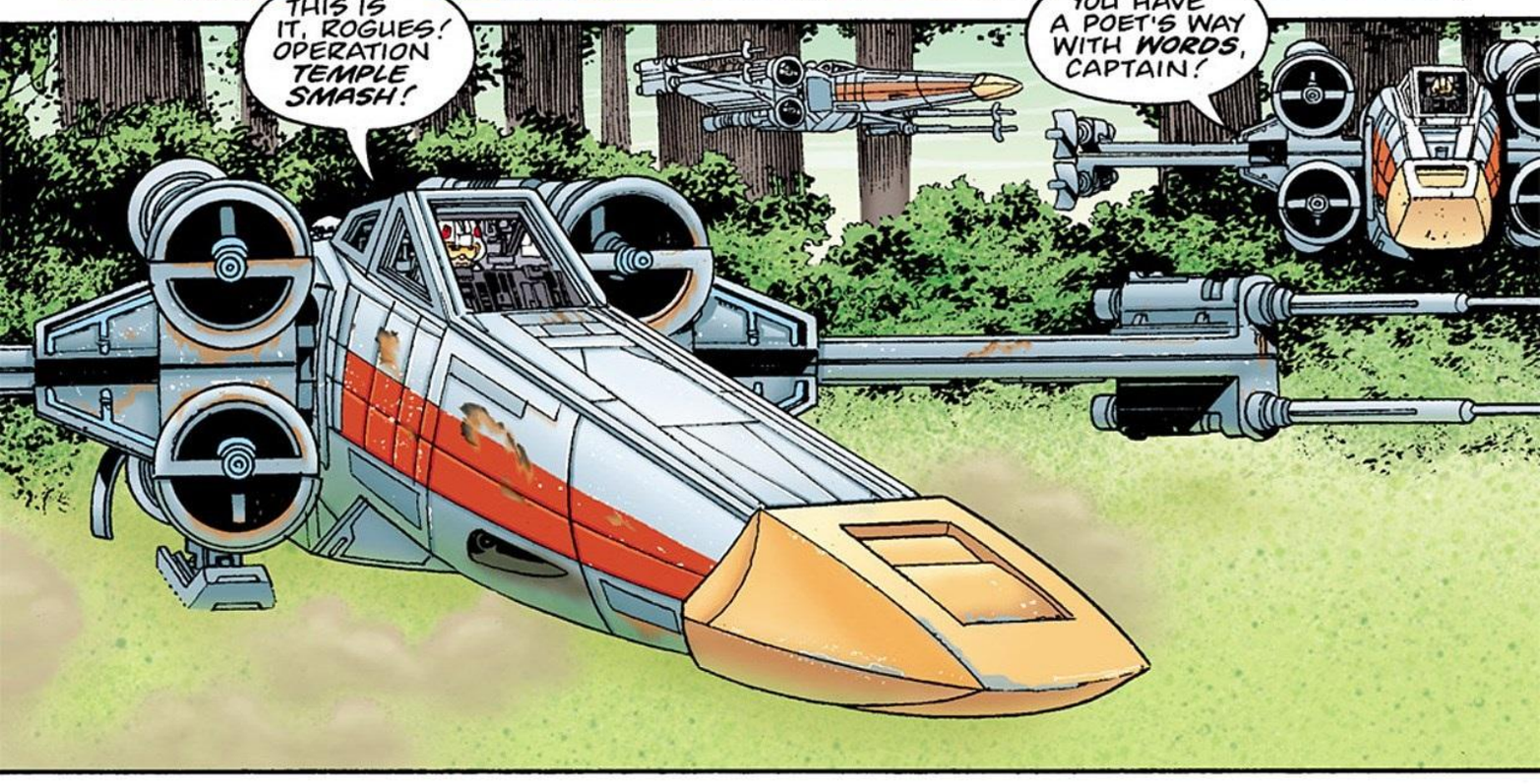

WORSE THAN THE LAST. HE SAYS THAT GIROV COMMANDS INTERCEPTORS... AND HIS TACTICAL KNOWLEDGE MAKES HIM A MUCH MORE FORMIDABLE FOE.
I OVERHEARD HIM TELL LIEUTENANT CELCHU TO EXPECT CASUALTIES.
IN WAR, IBTISAM, ONE ALWAYS EXPECTS CASUALTIES.

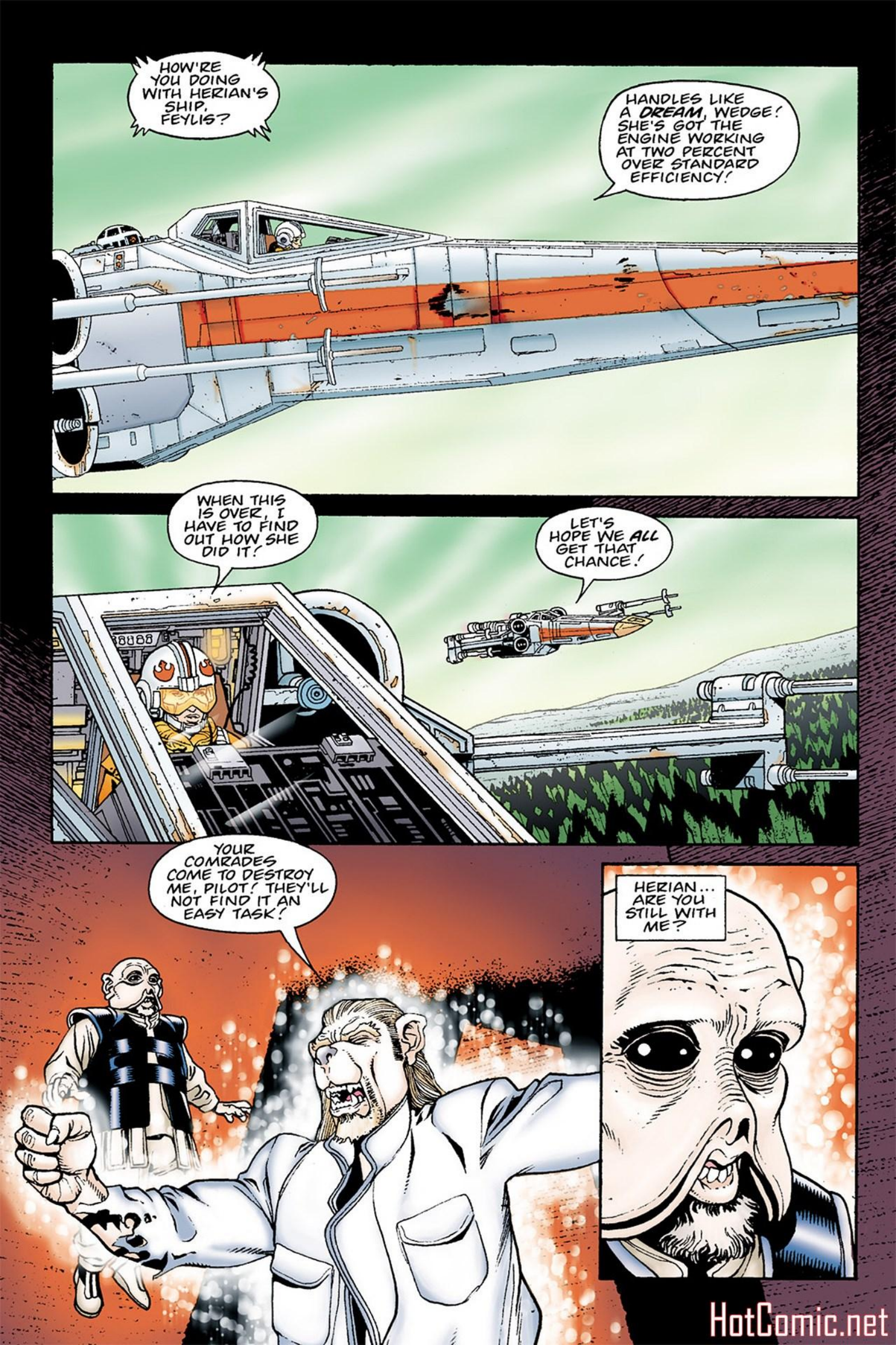
WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY, NRIN, IS THAT YOUR LOSS WOULD BE FELT... MOST KEENLY.
GOOD LUCK, QUARREN.

THE SAME TO YOU, CALAMARI.

IT'S TOO SOON TO BE USING THIS LEG, HOBBIE! YOU JUST CRAWLED OUT OF A BACTA TANK! YOU SHOULDN'T BE GOING INTO BATTLE!
THE ODDS WILL BE LONG ENOUGH, WES, WITHOUT AN ABLE-BODIED PILOT SNOOZING ON A COT IN SICKBAY!

YOU'RE A GOOD PILOT AND A DAMN FOOL, KLIVAN, AND WHAT'S MORE...
...YOU NEED TO LAUNDER YOUR SOCKS.


THIS IS IT, ROGUES! OPERATION TEMPLE SMASH!
YOU HAVE A POET'S WAY WITH WORDS, CAPTAIN!



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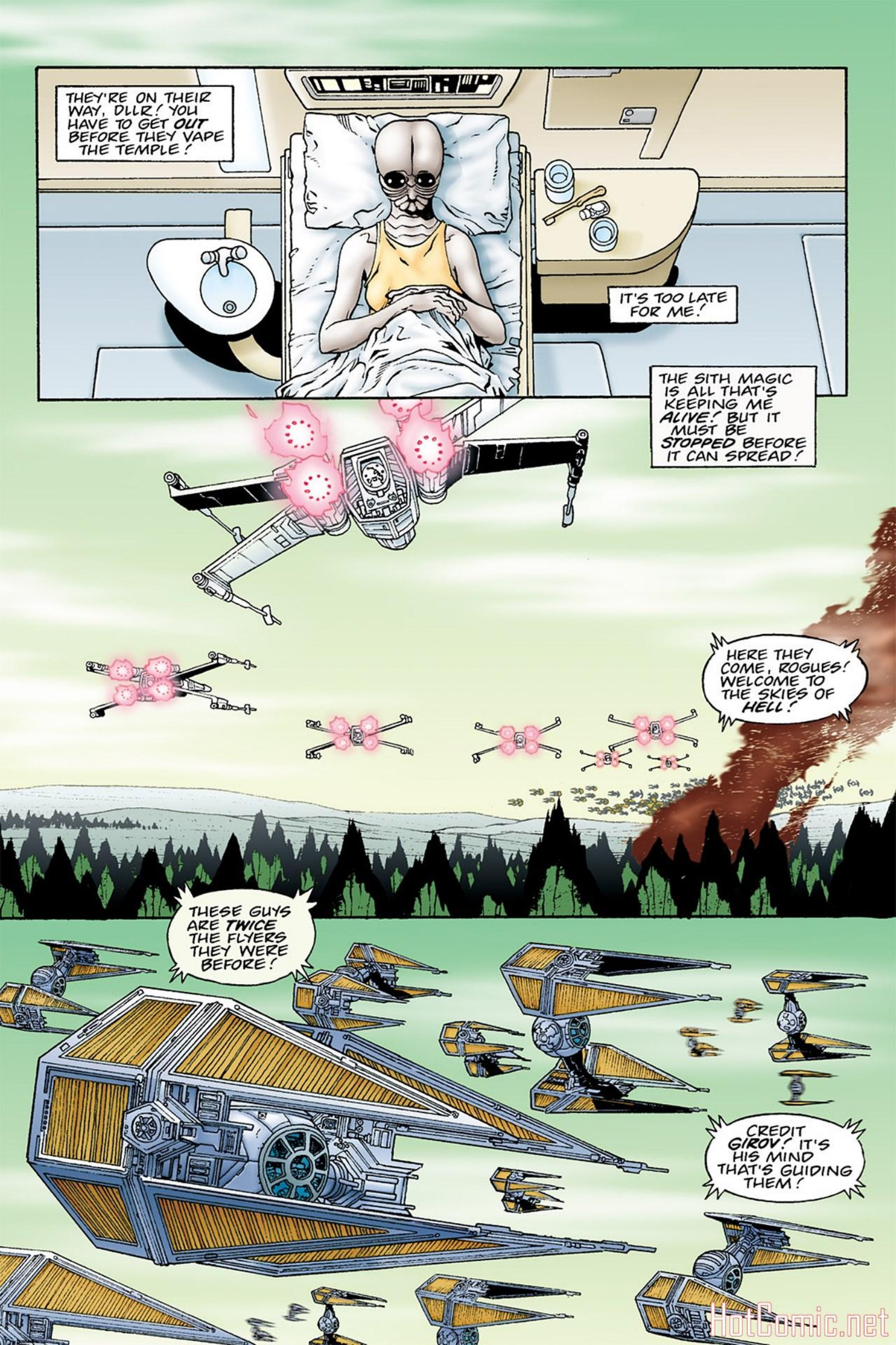

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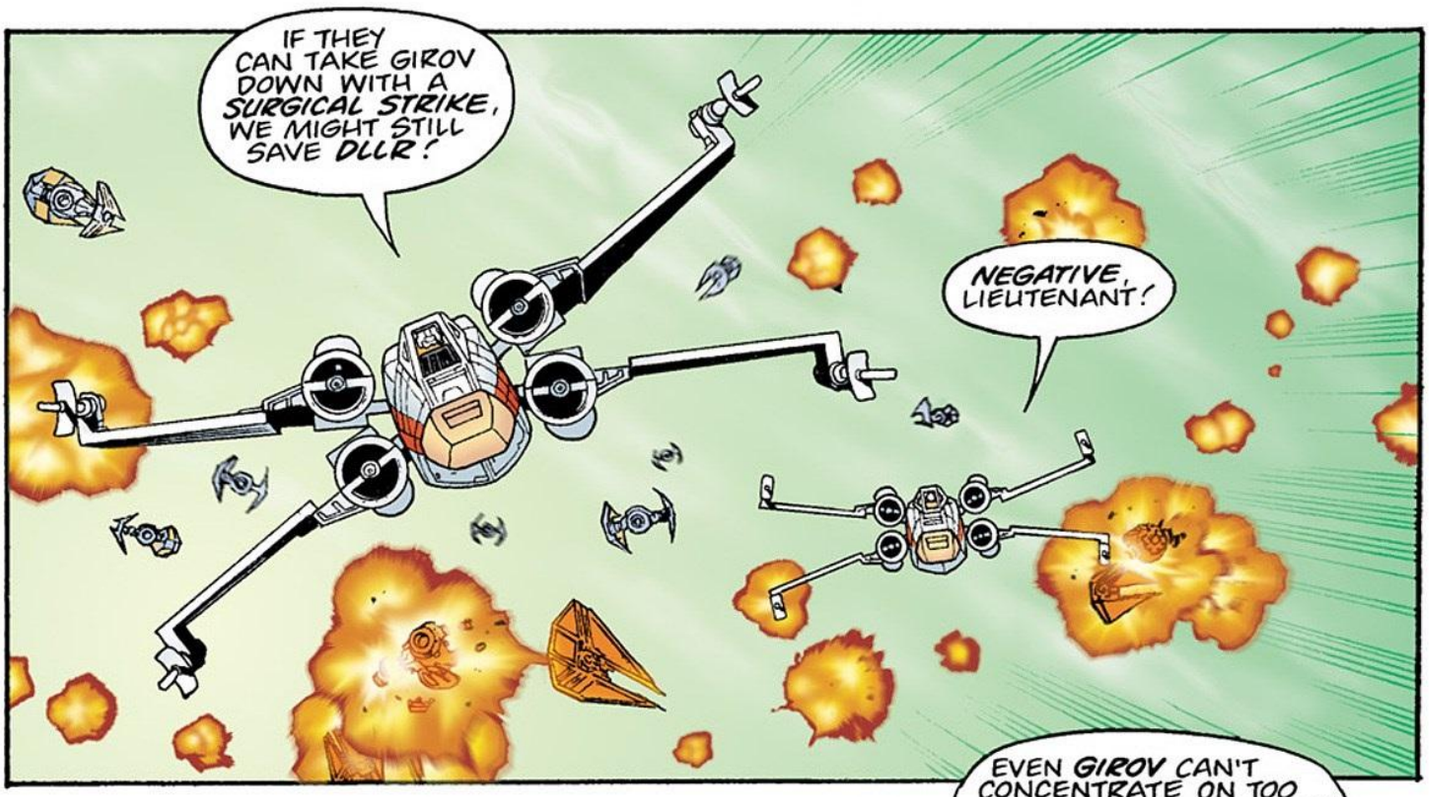
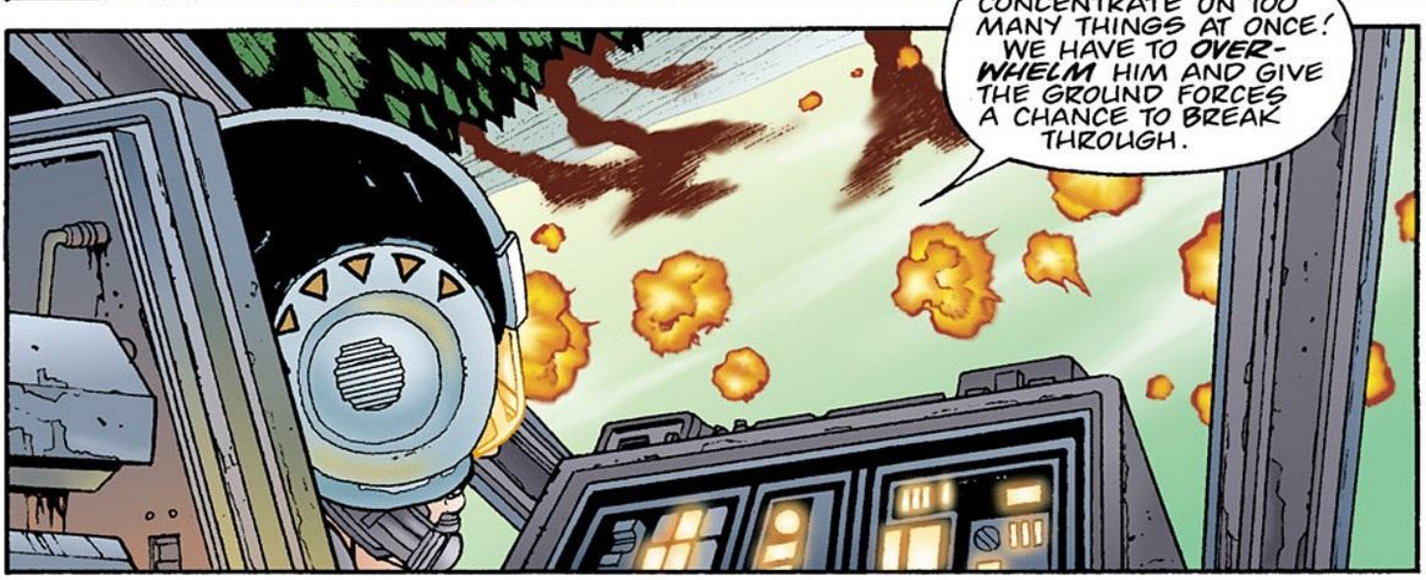
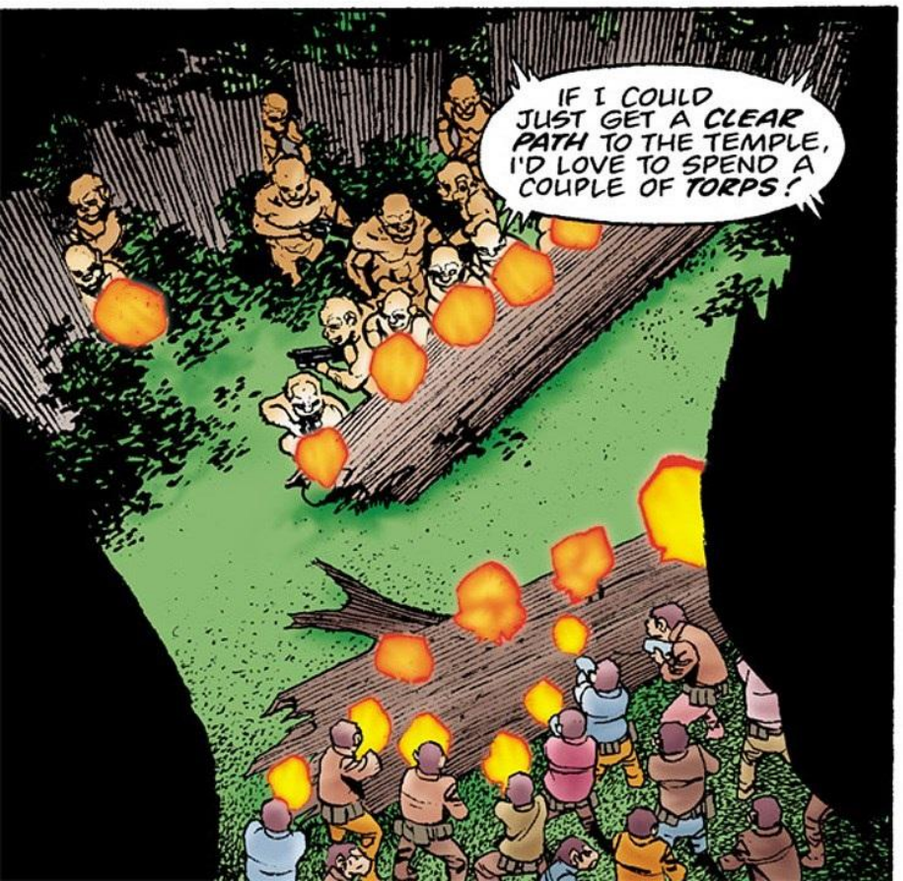
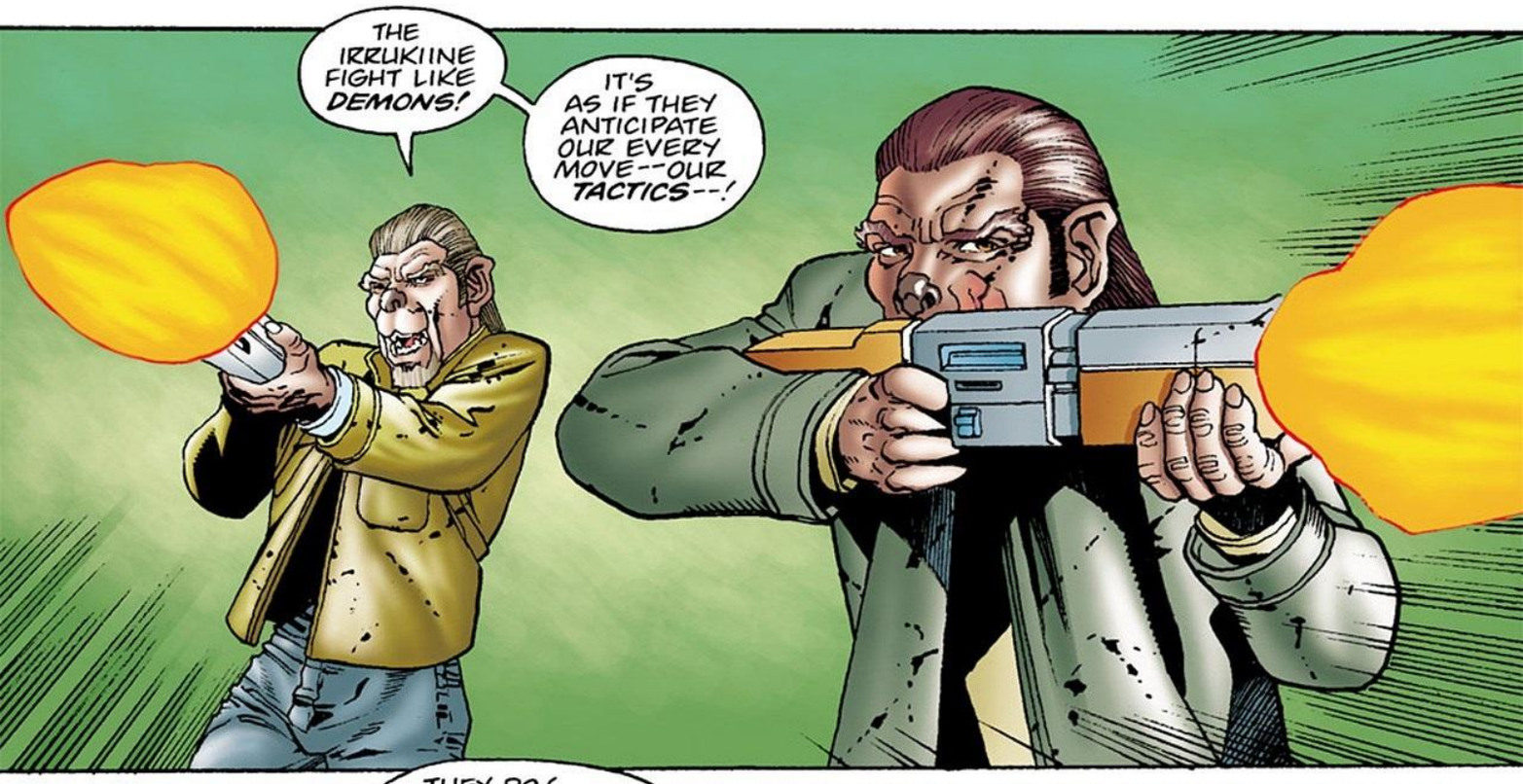

IF THEY CAN TAKE GIROV DOWN WITH A SURGICAL STRIKE, WE MIGHT STILL SAVE DLLR!
NEGATIVE, LIEUTENANT!


EVEN GIROV CAN'T CONCENTRATE ON TOO MANY THINGS AT ONCE! WE HAVE TO OVER-WHELM HIM AND GIVE THE GROUND FORCES A CHANCE TO BREAK THROUGH.


IF I COULD JUST GET A CLEAR PATH TO THE TEMPLE, I'D LOVE TO SPEND A COUPLE OF TORPS!

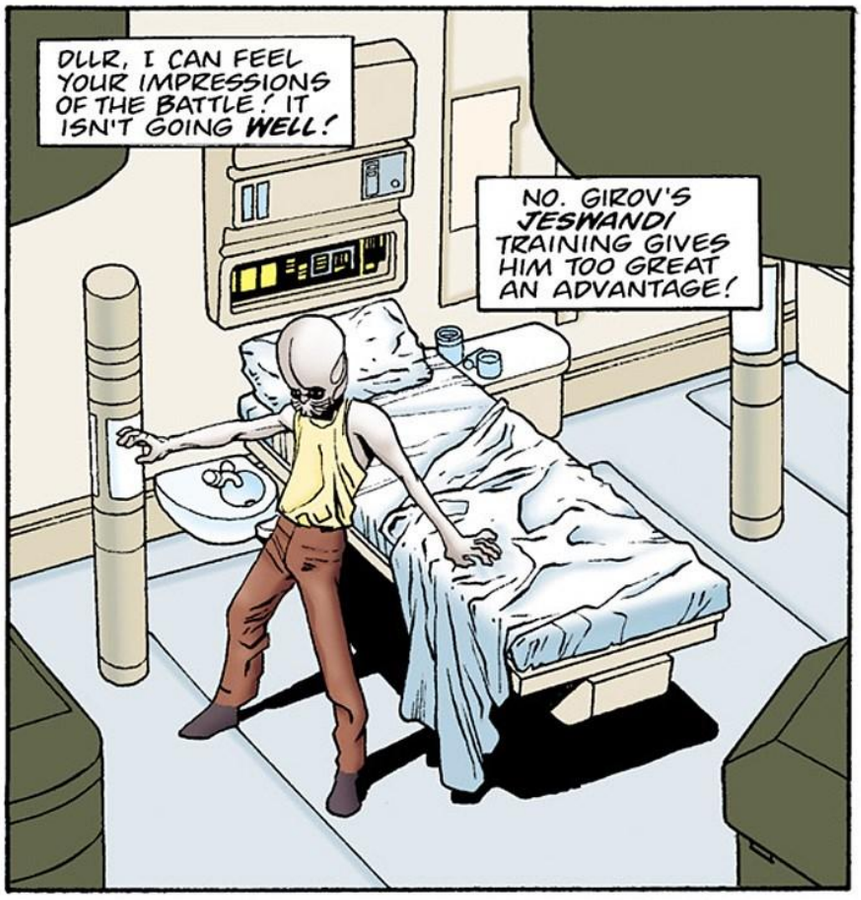
UGGNNN!

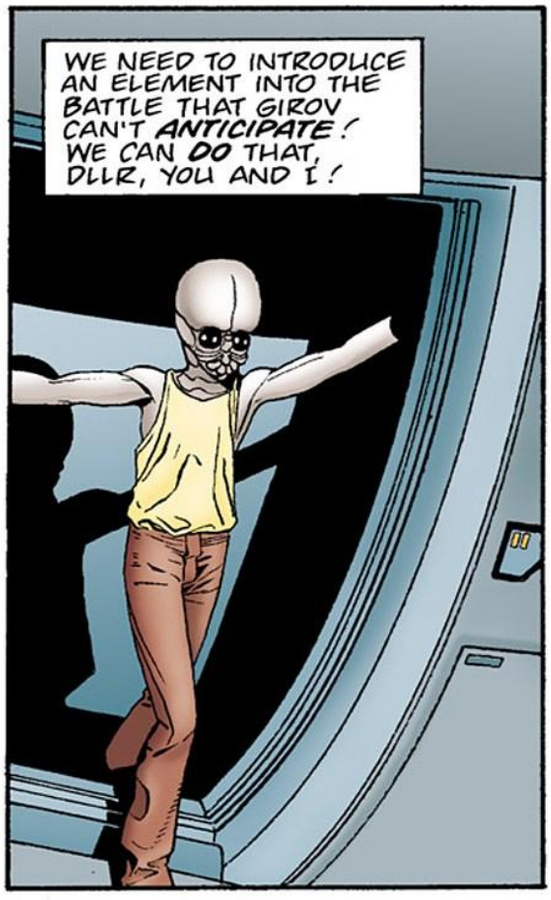

THE IRRUKIINE FIGHT LIKE DEMONS!
IT'S AS IF THEY ANTICIPATE OUR EVERY MOVE--OUR TACTICS--!

THEY DO! REMEMBER...OUR OWN COMMANDER CONTROLS THEIR ACTIONS!

THEN HOW DO WE STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THEM?
PERHAPS WE DON'T...

...BUT THAT'S NO EXCUSE FOR FAILING TO TRY!





THE SIGHT-ENHANCERS I WEAR TO PILOT AN X-WING WERE DAMAGED IN THE BLAST. I NEED YOU TO GUIDE ME IN, DLLR!

BUT FEYLIS IS FLYING YOUR SHIP!

NO PROBLEM-- I'LL JUST BORROW HERS!

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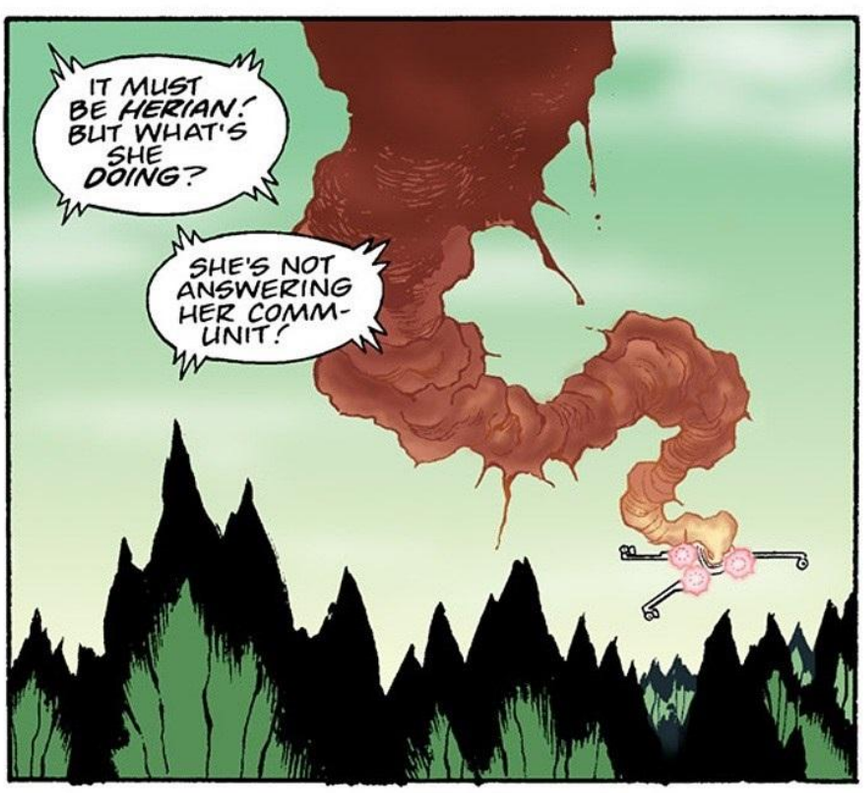
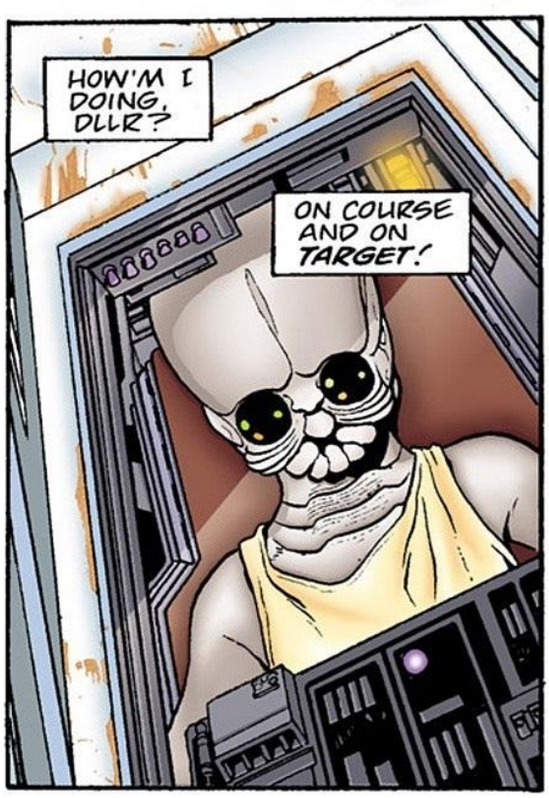
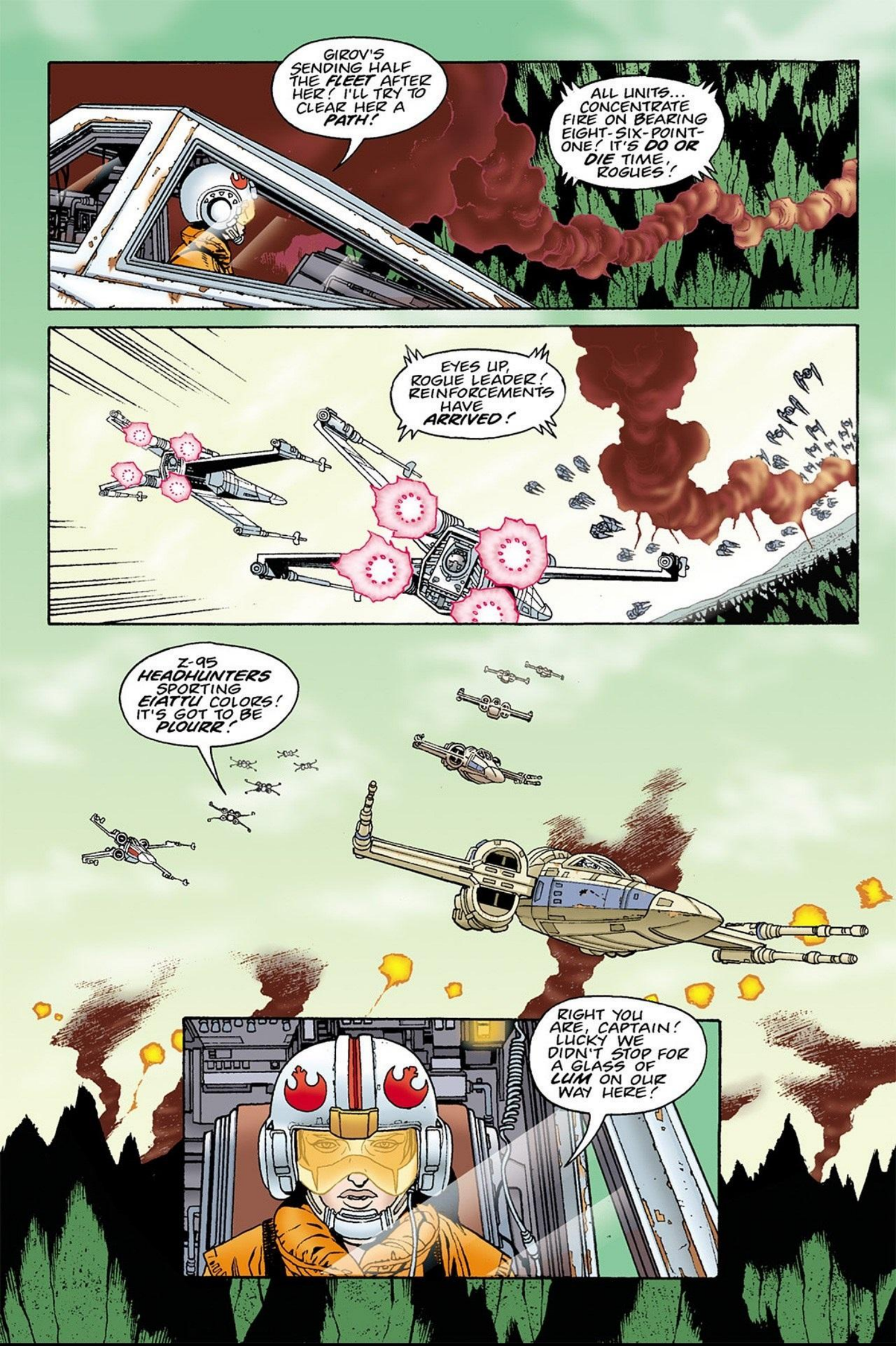
MY SHIELDS ARE WEAKENING, CAPTAIN! I'LL BE FLYING DEFENSELESS IN ANOTHER FEW MINUTES!
THAT'S THE KIND OF INFO YOU DON'T BROADCAST, NRIN!
SORRY, CAPTAIN!

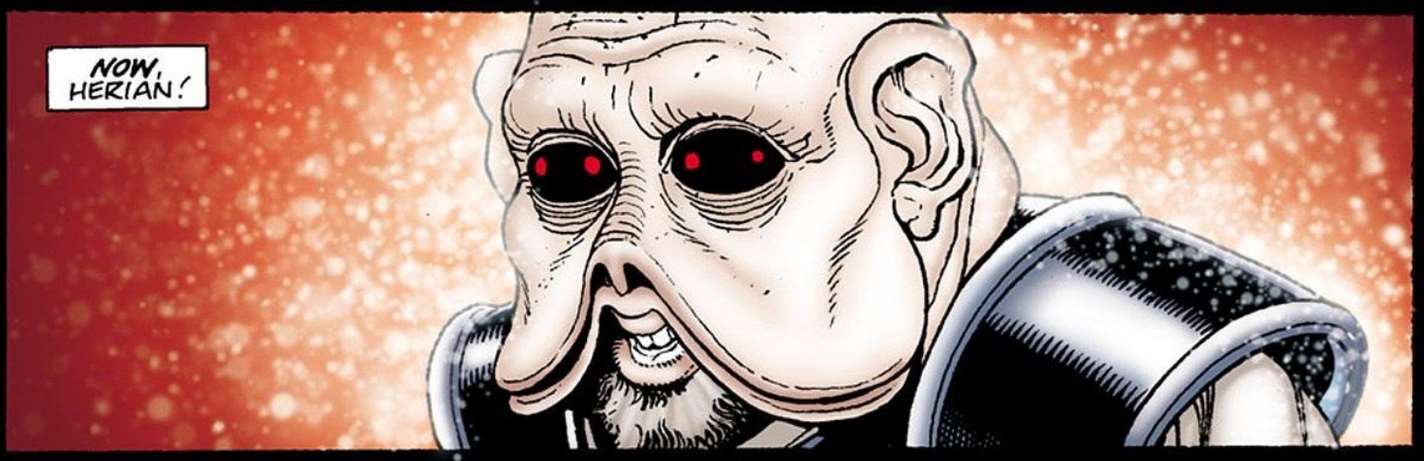
CAPTAIN ANTILLES, THIS IS FEYLIS! I'VE JUST SPOTTED MY OWN SHIP HEADED FOR THE TEMPLE!
WHAT?!

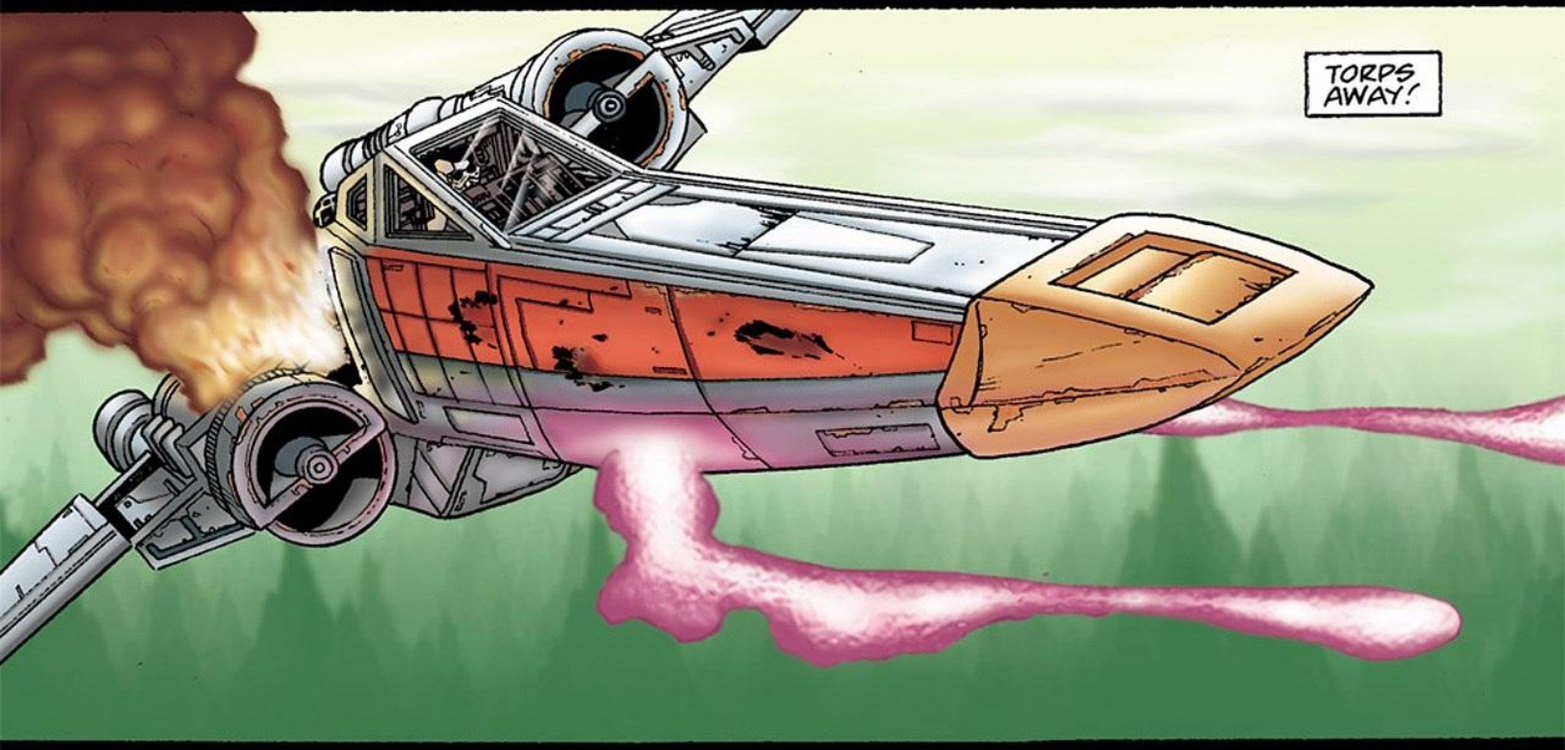

IT MUST BE HERIAN! BUT WHAT'S SHE DOING?
SHE'S NOT ANSWERING HER COMM-UNIT!


HOW'M I DOING, DLLR?
ON COURSE AND ON TARGET!


GIROV'S SENDING HALF THE FLEET AFTER HER! I'LL TRY TO CLEAR HER A PATH!
ALL UNITS... CONCENTRATE FIRE ON BEARING EIGHT-SIX-POINT-ONE! IT'S DO OR DIE TIME, ROGUES!
EYES UP, ROGUE LEADER! REINFORCEMENTS HAVE ARRIVED!
Z-95 HEADHUNTERS SPORTING EIATTU COLORS! IT'S GOT TO BE PLOURR!
RIGHT YOU ARE, CAPTAIN! LUCKY WE DIDN'T STOP FOR A GLASS OF LUM ON OUR WAY HERE!

TOO MANY UNITS! CAN'T CONTROL EVERYTHING!


NOW, HERIAN!


TORPS AWAY!

THE TORPS WEREN'T ENOUGH! I'M GOING IN, DLLR!
THERE'S ENOUGH FUEL AND WEAPONRY IN HERE TO BLOW UP A CITY! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TOUCH IT OFF!
YOU'VE GOT IT!
YOU'VE GOT IT! FANTASTIC JOB, HERIAN! ABSOLUTELY...
...FANT--!

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NOT TO SEEM UNGRATEFUL, PLOURR, BUT WHAT POSSESSED YOU TO COME AFTER US?
I TOLD MY HUSBAND THAT IF I HAD TO HOST ANOTHER DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION, I'D START A FIGHT AMONG THE DELEGATES JUST TO KEEP MYSELF AWAKE!
HE SAW THE WISDOM IN LETTING ME ESCAPE THE DUTIES OF OFFICE FOR A SHORT VACATION.
LUCKILY, I REMEMBERED YOUR THEORY ABOUT THE TRANSPOSED COORDINATES. THAT BROUGHT ME TO MALREV 4.
FROM THERE IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF SCANNING FOR ENERGY LEVELS, WHICH WERE CONVENIENTLY HIGH DURING THE BATTLE.
YOUR ARRIVAL COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE TIMELY. THANKS TO THE ADDED DISTRACTION, HERIAN WAS ABLE TO COMPLETE HER RUN ON THE TEMPLE.
SHE AND DLLR WILLINGLY GAVE UP THEIR LIVES FOR THE ALLIANCE.
IT'S A PAINFUL TRUTH, BUT SOMETIMES THE ONLY WAY EVIL CAN BE DEFEATED IS BY THE SELFLESS, SACRIFICIAL EFFORTS OF GOOD PEOPLE.
WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT, WHEN OUR TIME COMES, THE CAUSE IS AS NOBLE, AND THE NEED AS GREAT.

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A Word About the Omnibus Collections

Dark Horse Comics' *Star Wars* Omnibus Collections were created as a way to showcase actual novel-length stories or series, and to provide homes for "orphaned" series, single-issue stories, and short stories which would otherwise never be collected, or which might fall out of print.

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